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FEATURE STORY

The CLUE of the EMERALD RING

by Beulah Poynter

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See What's Coming!

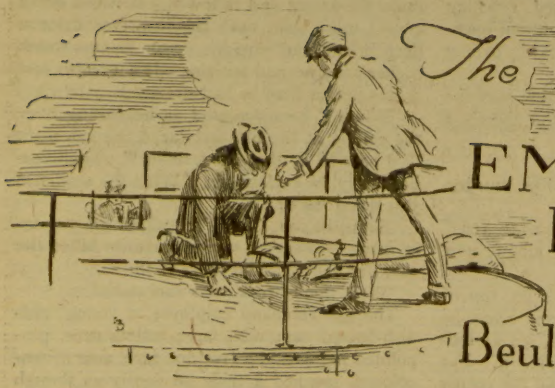
UMBER 107 of this magazine will be on the newsstands April 15th and we advise our friends to order a copy in advance, as that edition is going to contain so much good material that it will soon be all sold out. Your old favorite Hamilton Craigie is responsible for the feature story entitled "Hell's Hinges." This is one of the most exciting detective stories ever written. It deals with the exploits of a young sleuth in his dangerous efforts to break up a band of criminals. Every chapter makes you hold your breath with interest and suspense. Do not miss this great novelette for anything.

"Two Burns and a Short Circuit" was written by Earl Norton, one of the most graphic authors in America. His story is one of the kind that startles. Next, there's a snappy detective yarn from Will A. Wilkinson that will give you a dozen thrills before you finish reading it, and a little gem from Merritt L. Allen. He calls it "The Mouse," and the Mouse is a crook whose finish will surprise you. The story "Haunting Eyes," by Jack J. Gottlieb, has one of those unexpected endings that leave a lasting impression on the reader's mind.

Last, but not least, we will have a story by Gerard and Beatrice Luisi. It is entitled "The Voice of Horror," and shows the adventures of a detective while unraveling a mysterious crime. Nobody understands the methods of detectives better than Mr. Luisi, and the story is written in a pleasing style that is bound to absorb your interest. As usual the magazine will contain a large number of articles on peculiar subjects, and another of Russell Raymond Voorhees's scientific series, entitled "Phrenology," in which he gives you some clear and comprehensive instructions for analyzing the mind. As you can see, there will be enough material to fill a bigger and more expensive magazine, and yet we stick to our old price of ten cents a copy. We want to give you as much as we can of the very best quality for the lowest possible price.

Should any of your friends or acquaintances wish to see what a splendid publication this is, tell them to send us a request on a postal and we will mail them a sample copy free of charge.

THE EDITOR



The CLUE of the EMERALD RING

by Beulah Poynter

CHAPTER ONE

"FOR the love av Mike, Bill, cast your optics on that gas tank!" Dottie Farfeather clutched the arm of the young man driving the machine and waved a trembling hand upwards toward the huge structure which rose high and dark above the bridge they were crossing.

It was an early spring morning, too early for even the day laborer (if he had lived in that vicinity) to be on his way to work. Dottie and her companion were returning home from a night of revelry which had ended with the break of day.

The young man glanced upward, then stiffened. "Say, what do you think it is?"

Dottie's face whitened in the pallid light. "It looks like a man tuh me," she whispered; "a man hangin' over the top."

"What d'ye reckon he's doing up there at this hour av the morning?" queried the young man.

"He ain't doing anything," gasped the girl; "he's dead, or it's a dummy. Look at the way he's hangin'. No live man would act that way!"

"Good Lord, Dot! And unless I'm off my nut, he's not got any clothes on!"

"Oughtn't yuh do something? Oughtn't yuh go up and see——"

He interrupted her impatiently. "D'ye think I'm aching for trouble? That man, if he's dead, didn't go up there of his own accord tuh die! And it ain't healthy for us to mix up in any murder."

"Murder?"

"I said it. You've not seen anything. Understand? And don't yuh go talkin' tuh any one. Keep your trap shut tight or they'll be draggin' yuh intuh court in a way that won't be pie."

She shrugged her shoulders. "You're so full up with crimes and them cheap novels you're always readin' yuh haven't any sense left. I can keep still if I wanta, but I don't. I'm gonna stop the first policeman I see and send him back tuh find out what that man is doin' up in the air two hundred feet, hangin' over the edge of a gas tank on Riverside Drive. Now if yuh don't wanta be a witness, or whatever yuh call it, yuh can stop your buzz buggy and let me out."

"You are a nut," he answered, "but I guess I'm a gentleman."

"I got a heart," was her reply.

A half-hour later Inspector Donovan, sleep-

ing the slumber of a healthy well-fed man, was aroused by the jangle of a telephone on a small table beside his bed.

"What the h——?" he muttered, reaching mechanically for the instrument without opening his eyes, and in the act knocking over a glass of water.

"Patrolman Davis speaking," came over the wire. "Sorry tuh disturb yuh, but there's a funny thing happened——"

"Funny!" Donovan snorted.

"Well, strange, then. Looks like murder, but can't say."

"Spill it. What are you hesitating for?" Donovan raised himself on one elbow, now thoroughly awake.

"There's a man hanging across the top of the gas tank at 128th street. From below he looks naked; as he hasn't moved, it's a cinch he's dead. A couple have reported it. I've seen him myself. Am just around the corner now."

"Wha-at?" Donovan sprang out of bed, bare feet cringing as they touched the cold floor. "How'd a dead man get up there?"

"Search me! He couldn't have climbed up there in that condition, that's one thing certain. What'll I do?"

"Send some one up to investigate. I'll be with you as soon as I can rustle into some clothes."

When Donovan reached the bridge the sun had become a golden, shining ball, turning the waters of the Hudson into a faintly glimmering yellow and clearly outlining the stark nude figure leaning grotesquely over the steel framework of the monster tank.

A young man from the gas company had mounted to the top and had returned with the information that the man was dead and that there wasn't a rag of clothing any place to be seen nor a weapon of any kind near him, though a great jagged hole in his breast with the blood congealed about it showed only too plainly how he had met his death.

"I'm going up there," said Donovan grimly.

Larry Tracy, a young, ambitious detective, started to protest, but the inspector waved him aside and motioned to the employee of the gas company.

"Come along," he said. "You'll have to go up again; I'm not used to this Alpine climbing."

Larry saw that Donovan was determined to make the assent and followed. It was a dizzy climb; more than once the inspector drew a deep breath and shut his eyes. It was much higher than he had anticipated; a greater test on his nerves than he had dreamed.

"Whew!" he ejaculated as he sprang over the railing at the top and faced the gas man. "I'd hate to do that for a living!" Then seeing Larry, he exclaimed: "What the devil are you doing here?"

"Same as you, Chief," chuckled the younger man. "There's a saying curiosity killed the cat; I'm out to see all there is to see."

"Well, don't break your fool neck!"

The gas company employee, a young, reddish-haired man with large yellow eyes, pinpointed pupils and a freckled face, now ashen-colored, laughed a trifle stridently as though almost hysterical at witnessing the result of a tragedy. He led the way across the structure to where the dead man lay. His distress at looking upon the gruesome object a second time caused Larry to ask him abruptly if he had ever seen the man in life.

"Me! Good God no!" gasped the other, his pallid face becoming a greenish cast in the vivid morning light.

Donovan squinted at him quizzically, then looked down at the murdered man. The better portion of the body hung over the railing in a perilous manner as though about to fall.

"I wondered how he was poised there," the inspector said, rubbing his chin. "Now I see." About the ankles of the corpse was tied a rope which in turn was fastened to a stone, not a large one, but heavy enough to keep the body from falling forward and off the building.

Donovan gave the rock a kick, then nursed his foot.

"How'd the darn thing get here?" he growled. "Give me a hand." Together they shoved the stone a little to one side and exposed an indentation in the tar and gravel which covered the metal, an indentation deeper than the mere presence of the stone would cause.

"Some one threw that rock, and it landed here," said Larry suddenly.

"How could anybody throw it high enough to reach up here?" asked the gas man.

Donovan looked at him with disgust and began his survey of the dead man. He was small, but exceedingly well-proportioned, and was probably middle-aged. His hair waved away from his forehead in a manner that made Donovan sniff.

"Marcelled, bet a cookie!" His hands showed extreme care, his nails having a much higher polish than is considered good taste. Upon one finger was a large emerald, in a peculiar setting of filigreed silver. This was his only distinguishing mark, for his body was clean of scars, birthmarks and moles, well cared for, nourished and pampered.

"A mamma's boy," said the inspector, "and rich."

"But who is he? And how did he get here?" asked Larry.

"Tell me who he is, how he got here, and I'll tell you who killed him," Donovan replied sarcastically. "There's only one thing certain, and that is he didn't kill himself."

The man had evidently been dead twelve hours or more. When the medical examiner made his report after the body had been lowered and taken to his office, he corroborated the inspector's statement to that effect.

"Get in touch with all the clubs and see if there is a member of any of them answering to the description of this chap, and find out who is missing," Donovan instructed the detective. "Also see what jeweler sold a ring like this one. Then get the name of the purchaser."

CHAPTER TWO

TRACY started forth leisurely, not at all loath to have an excuse to enter some of the smart clubs on the avenue which hitherto he had only seen from the outside. At his first stop his question regarding a member five feet six in height, gray-haired and well-built met with a laughing response.

"There's a dozen such men belonging here who would answer to that description; four at least sitting in the writing room. What's the idea?"

Larry explained his reasons for asking and described the peculiar silver setting of the emerald the dead man wore.

"Never saw a ring like it here," the steward continued; "was it new?"

"No. Evidently the man had put it on when his fingers were much slimmer, for it wouldn't budge over the knuckle. I've an idea that if he could have gotten it off the person who killed him wouldn't have left it on him as a mark of identification."

"If I were you I'd talk to the jewelers before I made a round of the clubs," the other advised him. "A club member could be missing for a month and we'd know nothing of it unless he'd been in the habit of calling for his mail every day or lived here."

The detective thanked him and sauntered down the street. It was the noon hour, and from all sides came shopgirls, hair-dressers, clerks and office boys intent on reaching a near-by restaurant or lunch room. Larry studied them all as they passed. Somewhere there was a man with extraordinary strength who, for some motive unknown as yet, had murdered the person he had seen that morning and had stripped him of all his clothing to hide his identity. Larry was positive the murderer was a man; no woman could have lifted the stone to which the body had been attached, nor the dead man himself. He fell to wondering if he might not pass the murderer and be unaware of it. He was so intent upon his thoughts that he almost collided with a girl, who, standing beside another one near her own size and age, was staring up at the sky with a fixed look of fascination.

"I beg your pardon," he said, snatching his cap off a thatch of brownish-black curls.

"Sure," smiled the girl, displaying large even white teeth. "Didn't know I was holding up the traffic. But I always get a thrill every time I see one of those sky ships."

"An aeroplane!" The words jerked across Larry's mentality. That was how the body was droped onto the gas tank! Donovan must have known it, it was so simple a solution, and the inspector had said nothing, waiting for Larry to discover it for himself. He laughed aloud.

The girl looked at him in a half-startled manner and nudged her companion. Larry felt a desire to thank her for what she had

done for him. Then seeing the girl's quizzical expression, he said something about being interested in aviation himself.

"My brother-in-law was a flyer during the war," said the other girl, a shy-appearing, mouse-colored little person, whose wan prettiness seemed to make her friend's vivid blonde coloring all the more noticeable.

"That so?" Larry stared at her. "Did he get overseas?"

"Oh, yes."

"You girls had your lunch?" he asked suddenly. "If you haven't suppose you let me treat?"

The vivid girl giggled, her companion flushed, then the first girl said: "Sure, why not? Are yuh game, Lil?"

"But, Dottie——"

"Oh, come, yuh gotta eat, and he's all right, ain't yuh, mister?" Dottie grinned at him impishly.

"You be the judge," he answered. He tucked a hand under the bend of an elbow of each girl and piloted them across the street.

It was nothing new to Dottie Farfeather, this making the acquaintance of a handsome stranger. She was a pretty girl, full of vivacity, admiration, and good times were parts of her life. But it was decidedly unusual to meet a young man who ignored her almost altogether and centred his attention on her drab little chum. Dottie was good-hearted; she liked to give Lillian a share of her pleasure, but she resented being *de trop*. She was piqued. What her host saw so interesting in Lil's mild gray eyes or in her monosyllabic conversation puzzled her.

All during the meal, eaten in a tea-shop tucked away on Forty-seventh street, Larry seemed to hang on the few words Lillian—he learned her other name was Cassidy—chose to utter. With elbows on the table, square chin resting on his palms, he studied her small pale face, scarcely glancing at Dottie's pink-and-gold loveliness.

"What do yuh do for a living?" that young lady finally burst forth.

"Me! Other people before they do me," chuckled the detective.

"Mr. Smart," she bantered, "you're no crook. I know the world well enough for that."

"So? What's your particular line of endeavor?"

"Oh, I change bills that rich guys present in exchange for the jewels they hang on their favorite girls' necks."

"Where?" Larry straightened.

"Oh, a few blocks from here. Wanta buy a solitaire?"

"No, but I'd like to ask you a question. Did you ever see an emerald ring in your shop?"

"Ask me something easy."

"Set in filigreed silver."

"No. Who'd put an emerald in silver? Platinum is the thing."

"I'll walk back to the shop with you." Larry pushed aside his chair, motioning to the waiter for his check. He was a little surprised to find that both girls were employed at the same place. When they entered the store Dottie's blue eyes suddenly became shrewd in expression, a hard little line crept about her mouth.

"What's the grand idea?" she asked. "Are you a detective?"

"You've guessed it," he answered, the smile vanishing from his frank countenance.

"My Gawd, I mighta known it. Bill told me tuh keep my mouth shut, but I never dreamed yuh'd hunt me out so soon." She looked actually frightened. Larry became curious. In a few words the girl explained how she had first seen the man on the gas tank that morning and had reported it to the police, but she had given a fictitious name and address to escape any notoriety.

"But yuh can't get away from the law," she added ruefully. "Bill was right. I am sure mixed up with a mess."

Larry laughed, thinking what a jade coincidence was. Then he assured her he had been unaware that she knew anything about the murder, and that it was quite by accident he had made her acquaintance. He then told her of the emerald ring the dead man had been wearing and the importance of finding the person who had sold it to him.

Lillian's gray eyes grew wide and interested during the recital. She never took her gaze from the young detective's face. When he asked to see the manager of the store it was she who went to get him.

Larry briefly explained his mission to the man, but he had never seen a ring set in filigreed silver, and had little to say beyond the fact that such a setting was most unusual for so valuable a stone.

"Why don't you call on Pettit & Burham?" he asked as Larry turned away. "They make a specialty of novelties."

"Thanks, I will." He met Lillian's keen gray eyes as she stood close beside him, listening to all that was said. There was something in the look of her pale little face that held him, something which made him address her again.

"Miss Lillian, are you fond of the theatre?"

She looked startled, almost frightened; for a second one small hand fluttered up to her throat, quick color flooded her face, then she nodded affirmatively.

"Like to go with me to the Follies?"

"Oh—er—yes."

"Where'll I call for you?"

"I live on Long Island; I'll meet you at the theatre," she stammered.

"All right. Eight o'clock. Suit you?"

"Oh, yes."

As she left the shop he heard Dottie Farfeather's clear young treble:

"Say, Lil, what d'ye mean makin' a mash on a good-lookin' detective?"

CHAPTER THREE

EIGHT o'clock found Larry in the lobby of the New Amsterdam Theatre anxiously scanning the faces of the inpouring throng. Lillian was late. She arrived breathless, paler if possible than before and obviously excited. The hand she gave him in greeting was feverish. Her eyes glowed. She was almost pretty in the frothy pink frock she wore, her mousey hair fluffed about her small pointed face under a drooping lace hat. But it wasn't her attractive appearance that caused Larry to mentally ejaculate: "Did I pick the right girl? Oh, boy, I'll say I did!"

She apologized in a husky voice for her lateness, and followed him into the theatre. All during the performance he stole surreptitious glances at her profile, and decided that if the girl was enjoying the show she had a novel way of expressing pleasure. When the flush faded from her cheeks it was replaced by a bluish pallor, which made her look ill. Her lips became positively white. Larry finally asked her if she weren't feeling well, and she admitted to having a headache.

Later when he suggested supper she refused, pleading the lateness of the hour and the distance to her home.

"I can just make a train," she said with a wan smile.

"Never mind the train," said Larry. "We'll take a taxi."

She started to protest about the expense, but he motioned to a waiting driver and assisted her into a machine. All the long drive out she was silent. He felt her shiver as their shoulders touched, and once showing sympathy for her nervousness, he placed his hand over hers, to find it was like ice. She quickly drew it away.

He was surprised to find that she lived in a rather pretentious house with a garden surrounded by a wide stone wall. In the darkness he saw the outlines of a barn-like structure behind the house itself, and decided it was a garage.

"I live with my sister," she said quietly "Some day you must meet her."

"I'd like to," he replied.

As he spoke the front door opened and a woman stepped outside. In the light which flooded from the hallway Larry saw that she was tall and very slender and that she had a wealth of taffy-colored hair.

"Lillian," she called.

The girl in the taxi started violently. She reached for the door, trying to open it before the machine came to a dead stop. Larry turned the knob and stepped out, holding out his hand to assist her to alight.

"Wait a minute," he said; "aren't you going to say good-night to me?"

She laughed almost hysterically and paused.

"It's been lovely," she stammered. "Thank you so much for taking me."

He did not release the hand she had given him, but when she tried to draw it away he walked with her to the gate.

"Isn't that your sister now on the veranda?"

"Yes—er—yes—I—I think it's Dorothy."

"Have you more than one?"

"Yes. Oh, two. Dorothy is married."

"Bring your friend in," said the woman on the steps. Her voice was musical, that of a cultured woman. Again the little mousey girl shivered as though with fear, but she asked him if he cared to go inside.

"Sure," he laughed.

Face to face with the woman called Dorothy the young officer decided she was by far the most beautiful person he had seen in many a day. There was a certain vague resemblance to her younger sister, but where Lillian was shadowy and elusive she was definitely a gorgeous piece of flesh and blood, a creature to demand homage from even the street gamins. She was dressed in the height of fashion, in a manner which spoke of wealth as well as extreme good taste. Lillian in a breathless sort of way introduced them, and Mrs. Stafford led the way into the room opening off the hall, graciously motioning to Larry to be seated.

He wondered at the difference in the manner of the two sisters. Something of his bewilderment must have shown in his face, for the older one, laughing, explained that they were only half-sisters.

"May I offer you something to drink?" she asked, "or will you arrest me for having liquor in the house?"

"Oh, you know my profession?" he inquired, raising his eyebrows.

"Indeed, yes. Lillian has to give an account of all her friends before we permit her to go about with them."

Lillian shrugged her shoulders, and to Larry it seemed an angry gleam shot through her mild gray eyes. Intuitively he realized that all was not well between her and her handsome sister.

Not jealousy, surely, he wondered.

"Do you know I was most curious to meet you," continued the softly modulated voice. "I've never even seen a detective before and was very anxious to see just what one looked like."

"Dorothy!" The words snapped out, but Dorothy laughed.

"Do you find me like other human beings?" said Larry lazily. He was conscious that she was playing with him, and felt certain that there was something behind it. Under the half-closed lids of her long tawny eyes a gleam of cupidity was focused on him. The air was tense, and in her frankly curious voice was a note of expectancy.

"Rather more attractive than most men," she replied. "Shall it be Scotch and soda?"

"Please."

When she left the room Lillian turned on him, her slim little body was rigid, her fists clinched, and when she spoke her voice broke. "What do you want? You didn't take me to the theatre because you liked me. I thought you did at first, but I know better now, and why are you talking to Dorothy?"

"My! My!" chuckled Larry. "You are hospitable. Why wouldn't I talk to her? She's very attractive."

"Well, do it then!" she half sobbed, and rushing out of the room she left him alone. A moment later Mrs. Stafford returned. She merely smiled when Larry told her that Lillian had deserted him, and did not seem at all averse to having him all to herself.

While they were speaking he heard a sound that made him literally prick up his ears, while the charmingly loquacious woman facing him lost her sang-froid and stammered over the remark she was making. That whirling, buzzing noise could be made by nothing but an aeroplane, a plane unquestionably flying close to the house in which they were. Suddenly he remembered the vast grounds at the back and the structure he had taken for a garage. Perhaps it housed the plane.

Larry had always said he was a lucky young devil and that it was something more than mere cleverness that so often guided his footsteps toward his quarry. But it seemed too much to expect of fate that she should have led him to the very person he was hunting.

"Sounds like an aeroplane landing near here," he said quietly.

"It is. My husband was an aviator during the war, and after it was over he has fussed around with a machine of his own and has nearly driven us all frantic for fear he will be killed."

"Rather an expensive toy, isn't it?"

"Yes. But, as he says, Tom has more money than brains. He has an idea he is an

inventor and can perfect the airship beyond anything that has ever been done."

A little later Larry heard a door slam, the sound of a motor driving away. He waited a few minutes, hoping to catch a glimpse of the aviator, but seeing that his hostess had lost all interest in him, he could not in good taste prolong his stay, and departed with the determination of calling the following day. The taxi he had left waiting was gone, and he had to walk to the station and there wait for a train into the city.

CHAPTER FOUR

"WELL, what do yuh know?" Inspector Donovan asked the young detective when Larry stepped into his office the following morning.

"That a man in an aeroplane dropped the body from his machine onto the tank," Larry replied, feeling painfully conscious that his superior was laughing at him.

"So?" The inspector flicked the ashes from his cigar. "Did it take you twenty-four hours to find that out?"

Larry grinned. "About thirty minutes. Also, I'm pretty certain there is a woman somewhere in the background."

"Foreground," chuckled the inspector. "Know who she is?"

"Do you?"

"I'm asking you."

"No. Not yet, but I have a party in mind."

"Found out who the dead man is?"

Larry shook his head.

"I don't seem to have accomplished a thing," he said gloomily; "I've inquired in all the Fifth avenue shops where jewelry is sold, and haven't found a person who ever saw a ring like the one he was wearing, and as for finding out anything about him in a club, that's an impossibility. The man is the commonest type there is. The stewards showed me a half dozen in every club answering to his description." He spoke dismally, and the inspector laughed.

"Follow up the little dame you are trotting around with; I've a hunch you're on the right track," he said, squinting at his assistant significantly.

"What dame?" Larry stiffened.

"The girl you took to the Follies. It happens I saw you last night."

"Oh!"

An hour or so later Larry entered the shop where Lillian was employed and inquired for her. Dottie Farfeather left her desk and sauntered toward him, a pert expression on her piquant little face.

"Say, what did yuh do tuh my friend las' night?"

"I don't understand."

"Well, she's sick. Her sister telephoned this morning that Lil was laid up in bed and couldn't make it to-day."

"Oh, I'm sorry!" exclaimed Larry. "She was all right when I left her last night."

"Must be something kinda serious, for Lil ain't very strong and I've seen her come tuh work before with a head that 'ud put me or any other she-human tuh bed with the ice-bag."

"What's her telephone number?" he asked suddenly. "I'll phone her and see if there isn't something I can do."

Dorothy's cool, beautifully modulated voice answered him on the wire. He pictured a certain stiffening when he gave his name and inquired about her sister. He was certain that she resented his interest, and her spoken attitude was quite in line with his deduction.

"I wonder if I might call to see her?" he ventured.

The woman's voice became panicky.

"No, oh, no, she isn't to see any one: the doctor has forbidden it!"

"Why, is it anything very serious? What is the trouble?"

The woman stumbled over her words, coughed, then Larry heard the click of the receiver being hung upon the hook, and he turned away with his question unanswered.

"I hate to do it," he muttered, "but it can't be helped, and anyway, if there's nothing wrong in Denmark, she shouldn't treat me this way."

He called the nearest cabman and, giving the Long Island address where Lillian lived, climbed into the machine. It seemed hours to him before he reached the high stone fence

which surrounded the grounds, and when he rang the doorbell he was compelled to wait several moments before any one came to answer it. Then it was Dorothy herself who did so. But a very different Dorothy from the vivacious, smiling woman who had acted as hostess on the preceding evening. She was ghastly white, her hair was in disorder, and the tea gown she wore was bedraggled and torn. For a moment she faced him, then attempted to close the door in his face, but Larry coolly brushed her aside and stepped into the hallway.

"What do you want?" she asked in a throaty whisper.

"I'd like to see your sister, please," he said as casually as he could, though his heart was beating a tattoo against his ribs.

"That you can't do. Lillian is not to see any one."

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Stafford," said Larry, his mouth taking on a hard unlovely line, "but I must see your sister."

"Why?" she stammered, and he saw that her eyes were full of tears. He suddenly felt very sorry for her and regretted his abruptness. "You are here because you are a detective?"

"Yes."

She made a helpless sort of gesture. The tears rolled down her cheeks unheeded.

"I—I thought so," she sobbed. "I knew that was why you were with Lillian last night. But you can't see her, Mr. Tracy; you can't see her. I—I don't know where she is."

"Don't know where she is?"

"No. I telephoned her employer this morning that she was ill just to cover up her absence. Lillian has run away."

"Run away!" he ejaculated. "In Heaven's name, why."

"Come in," she said wearily. She opened the library door, and he followed her into the room. Crossing to a writing table, she picked up a scrap of paper which had evidently been crushed into a ball after having been read. Without a word she handed it to him. He smoothed it out, then gave a long whistle on reading the words written on it.

"DOROTHY, DEAR: Tom and I have gone away; please don't try to find us; later I will explain everything if you don't already understand. Please forgive and love me. Your heartbroken sister, LILLIAN."

"My Lord!" exclaimed the young man. "Tom is——"

"My husband," said the woman in a lifeless voice.

"It's damnable," Larry continued, not knowing what to say in the face of such sudden grief.

"I can't understand it," she muttered. "Lillian to do this to me. My baby sister, and I loved her so."

"Your husband——"

"I'm not thinking about him; it's Lillian I'm thinkng of; she is so young, so sweet. I thought she loved me. I can't somehow reconcile Lillian with treachery."

"Had you any idea that she was in love with your husband?"

"No, I knew she was fond of him, like a sister, you know, and that is how he seemed to care for her. Tom is a strange man, though; nothing he does surprises me."

"Mrs. Stafford, what are you going to do about it?"

"I don't know." She shook her head hopelessly. "What can I do?"

"Bring them back. Your sister is too young to have her life ruined at its very beginning. You are quite willing to forgive her, I'm sure."

"Oh, yes."

"Unquestionably she has been influenced by your husband. I've seen very little of her, but in that short time I—I—well, I can no more imagine her doing a thing like this than you can. We must bring her back before it is too late."

"Where will you go to find her? They must have left some time in the night, for I rise early, and I found this when I came downstairs in the morning."

"Did you telephone the station to see if they had taken the train into town?"

She shook her head. "No, they used the car. I learned that at once."

Larry asked the make of the car, the hotel where her husband was in the habit of staying when in the city, and for a detailed description of the man himself. He learned that Tom Stafford was a little over six feet,

brawny, lithe and muscular, exceedingly well built and thirty years of age.

The telephone bell rang at that moment; the woman started so violently it seemed as if she were going to faint.

"Let me," he said, crossing to take down the receiver, but she pushed him aside and answered the caller herself. As she did so she cast a nervous glance over her shoulder at the detective.

"No, he isn't here," she replied in a shaky voice to the question which came over the wire. "No, I've not seen him for several days. No, no, I tell you, I don't know where he is, nor have I heard from him. You are welcome." She hung up the receiver with a little defiant gesture and turned to Larry.

"Some one else missing?" he asked casually, looking at her under half-closed lids.

"Missing! Why—why—no, I think not—er—er—an acquaintance just inquired if I—if Norman Leigh was here."

"Norman Leigh?" Larry lighted his cigarette, holding the burning match before his face a little longer than necessary. "An old friend of yours?"

"Why—er—yes—yes. Why do you ask?"

"If his friends telephone to you to find out about him it's obvious, isn't it, that they know he is in the habit of visiting here?"

"Of course," she smiled wanly. "How stupid of me not to realize that. I'd never make a detective, would I, Mr. Tracy?"

"I wonder if he is the same chap I used to know," he continued, watching her expressive face. "Middle-aged chap with gray hair, smart dresser and well built, always wears a curious emerald ring set in silver and——"

"That's Mr. Leigh," she said wearily, as though bored with his trivial talk. "The description fits my friend. He got that ring in China. Is your friend an Englishman?"

"Yes. I lost track of him some time ago and"—he leaned forward and said abruptly—"Mrs. Satfford, do you know that he was murdered forty-eight hours ago?"

"Murdered!" she stared at him, at first not comprehending. "Murdered? Why, who would want to murder him? He was the most harmless person in the world?"

"Mrs. Stafford, was Norman Leigh your lover?"

She straightened quickly; the yellow eyes facing his became black, an angry flush spread over her pallid face.

"Mr. Tracy," her voice lashed him with its indignation, "perhaps your position as a detective gives you the right to insult me, but you have been my guest here, and as your hostess I claim the right to show you the door."

"Mrs. Stafford, please—I'm sure I beg your pardon—but this man met his death in a most unusual manner. It is my duty to find his murderer. Now, if by any chance your husband was jealous of him——"

"What do you mean?"

He explained where the body was found, how no one but a person in a flying machine could have placed it there, and that the authorities were positive that the person who placed it there was an aviator.

"Don't you see?" he continued relentlessly. "Your husband is an aviator; he has run away: you admit that Leigh was a frequent visitor here; perhaps he was jealous of him; perhaps——"

But he was speaking to deaf ears; the woman had fainted dead away.

CHAPTER FIVE

DURING the following week Larry had many occasions to dislike the task that Donovan had given him. He enjoyed tracking down criminals, the running to cover of law-breakers, but when it came to spying upon women, gentlewomen at that, he felt disgusted with himself and his job.

Since the morning when he had forced himself upon Dorothy Stafford and had learned that her young sister had eloped with her husband, he had not been able to see her again. Several times he had called at the house on Long Island, but a colored maid, meeting him at the door, had informed him her mistress was ill and could not see any one. Nor did the presentation of his badge do him any good, for she had slammed the door in his face, and he had been compelled to "blow off steam" on the veranda and make the best of a humiliating situation.

Further information regarding the Staffords

and their relationship to the dead Englishman he secured from a neighbor who lived alone at the edge of their estate in a small stucco cottage. John England, a tall, raw-boned man of the type one expects to be taciturn and uninterested in the goings-on of his townsmen, proved to be very loquacious and rather desirous than otherwise to assist the detective with any information that he could give.

He ushered his visitor into his study, apologizing for its mussy appearance and explaining as the cause of this condition that at the present he was servantless, and also used the room for a laboratory, being interested in some chemical tests.

"Yes, I know Tom Stafford and his folks well," he said, lighting his pipe and offering Larry a cigar. "Nice fellow. Can't understand his eloping with his wife's sister. Not like him, nor the girl either. It was generally understood that the girl was engaged, or at least interested, in an Englishman who hung around the place a great deal, a chap by the name of Leigh."

"Did you know this Leigh?"

England knocked the ashes from his pipe by hitting the bowl against the side of his shoe. He did not answer at once; when he did he said:

"Yes, I've met him. It would have been rather a pity if she had married him; so much older, you know."

"Do you read the papers much, Mr. England?"

A quizzical smile curled the rather full lips of the other man.

"Yes, Mr. Tracy, and the description of the dead man found on the gas tank coincides in every way with that of Norman Leigh; there isn't a doubt in my mind but that they are one and the same."

"You don't suppose that Leigh was interested in the wife instead of her sister, do you? I've recently learned that the man was considerable of a roué and liked to boast of his female conquests; he was put out of one club on that account."

"He was a damnable cur, and if young Stafford did kill him in a fit of jealousy I can't find it in my heart to blame him."

"You think Stafford murdered him?" Larry asked quietly.

The other man leaned forward, there was a steely gleam in the depths of his dark eyes.

"Isn't that what you think, Mr. Tracy? Isn't that why the men from your office are on his track? Isn't that why you are here asking me all these questions?"

Larry laughed.

"Perhaps. Yet it seems inconsistent to suppose a person will murder a man for jealousy of his wife when he himself elopes the next day with another woman."

"Unless," said John England slowly, "there was no love affair between this other woman and this man, and the elopement was planned with the cognizance of the wife herself to throw off any suspicions that might be aroused by her husband."

"By Jove!"

"Aviators owning their own planes are not common, Tracy, nor aviators jealous of wives they've left behind while they went to war; wives whose lonely hours have been brightened by unprincipled wretches who stayed at home, too cowardly to fight for their country, but not afraid to steal the fighters' wives!" England rose as he spoke, his heavy nostrils quivering with excitement. He brought a great brown fist down with a crash upon his study table to emphasize his remark.

"By Jove," Larry repeated rapidly. Then he leaned forward, pointing at the man's finger. "What a curious ring, Mr. England, an emerald set in—surely not silver?"

England whirled. He drew a deep sucking breath, then laughed.

"Yes, it is curious," he said lightly, regaining his composure; "I never saw but one other like it, and that belonged to that chap Leigh."

CHAPTER SIX

TWO days later, after the dead Englishman, now positively identified by several members of the club from which he had been expelled, was buried, Larry received a visit at his rooms which astounded him.

It was after six o'clock, and feeling exceedingly tired from a long and unsuccessful day, he had donned a well-beloved dressing gown, thrust a strong-smelling pipe between his

teeth and had prepared to spend a quiet evening at home, poring over a book of famous criminal cases which he had purchased that afternoon.

A timid knock at his door brought him to his feet, a scowl on his broad, good-natured brow.

"What the ——?" Then he opened the door.

Dottie Farfeather, in all the glory of her best frock and hat, stood before him; perhaps not so roguish of eye as when he had last seen her, for her face showed evidences of inward perturbation, but she was quite as pretty.

"Miss—Miss——" he stammered, not remembering her name and a little embarrassed about his appearance.

"Dottie Farfeather," she spoke up glibly. "Yuh remember me, don't yuh? I'm the girl that paled with——"

"Sure!" He opened the door wide enough for her to enter, apologizing for his dressing gown as he did so.

"Guess it isn't accordin' tuh Hoyle for a lady tuh go callin' on a gentleman, but I gotta piece of news tuh hand yuh that I think yuh oughta know." Dottie removed her hat and ran her plump white hands through her yellow-gold pompadour, carefully avoiding contact with the false puffs over her ears.

"Yes?" Larry inquired, studiously polite. "But how did you find me?"

"Easy enough. I called up headquarters, told them who I was, what I wanted, and asked for your boss. He gimme your address."

"Gosh!" Larry ejaculated to himself. He had visions of a ragging from Donovan the next day. "Well?" aloud, when his visitor was seated.

"Well, this is how it is. Mind givin' me a cigarette? Yuh don' object tuh girls smokin', do yuh? Oh, yes, where was I? Well, yuh know Lil Cassidy, Mr. Tracy, and so do I, and I'm just so damn mad—'scuse my French—at what the fool papers have said about her runnin' away with her sister's husband——"

"She wrote Mrs. Stafford to that effect," said the detective quietly.

"Now listen tuh me, and I'll give yuh an earful. Mr. Tracy, there's some girls that just nacherally go wrong no matter how yuh steer 'em, and there's some girls that are kinda drove or led into it; but there's some girls that 'ud go through hell and jump off the Palisades before they'd swerve an inch from the straight and narrow, and Lil Cassidy is one of that kind. I donna why she wrote that letter tuh her sister, nor where she is, but nobody from here tuh Timbuctoo can make me believe she's a bad girl!"

"Great Scott, but you're a loyal friend!" exclaimed Larry with admiration. "I liked her very much myself, and it didn't seem possible——"

"Sure yuh liked her. Now gimme your ear again. Lil Cassidy is class. Get me? Not like me, but family and education. Not that there's anything wrong with me nor that my folks ain't one hundred per cent., but I'm self-made, no advantages in my youth, understand? But Lil and her sister used tuh be rich. Oncet offhand, not meanin' tuh give away state secrets, she told me. Now this same bird that she's supposed to have eloped with lost all their dough in speculations. That's why she went tuh work, she never had tuh before. Now two days ago I gets a letter from her——"

"What?" Larry hitched his chair closer to hers.

"Yeh, I wasn't gonna say anything about it tuh any one till something I read in the paper made me put two and two together, and then I figured it was time for the big third-act climax. Now listen tuh this." She opened her knitted bead bag, extracted a piece of paper from it, smoothed out its crumpled folds and read:

"DEAR DOTTIE: Will you please collect my salary? I've almost a week coming to me, and I need it. I'll call at your house for it soon, or write you where to send it. Lovingly,

"LILLIAN."

"Now," she continued, folding the paper and thrusting it back in her bag, "I ask yuh what does Lillian want with a measly twenty dollars if she's chasin' around the country with her brother-in-law? And again I ask yuh what's he got tuh do with this?"

This proved to be the glaring headlines in the evening paper regarding a bank embezzle-

ment. Young Thomas Stafford, missing for two days, was unquestionably implicated, so the newspaper said. Although the bank had striven to keep the knowledge of the loss of the bank's funds from the press, it had leaked out. Not only had young Stafford eloped with his wife's sister, but he had used the money belonging to the bank of which he was vice-president to do it with.

It was a dirty story. Larry, reading the bald, sordid outlines, could picture the heartbroken, humiliated woman in her great lonesome house on Long Island, utterly crushed and ashamed through the disgrace forced upon her. Mentally the young man visioned the quiet little sister, demure, sweetly feminine, who had been one of the participants in the scandal. Like Dottie, her friend, he could not believe it of her; she was not the kind to fall either for love nor for mercenary reasons, and certainly not through vanity. He found himself wishing intensely for Dottie's faith.

There was a picture of Stafford in his aviator's uniform heading the article; a picture of a rather good-looking young man with a weak mouth and a vacillating chin, not a vicious face, but one clearly indicative of small character; a man easily swayed for good or evil, lovable, passionate, but without moral fibre.

"He took the money, all right," said Dottie slowly, watching the detective's face. "Lil said a lot tuh me she wouldn't said tuh anybody else, 'cause while we was friends we didn't run in the same set, and she knew I wouldn't blab. If he'd use up all of hers and her sister's money till their place was mortgaged all ways tuh Sunday, he wasn't gonna pass up a soft snap like a bank, was he?"

"But your friend——"

"Mebbe she's with him and mebbe she ain't, but of one thing I'm dead sure: Lil Cassidy is a good girl and she had nothin' tuh do with takin' this money."

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE following morning while Larry was still at breakfast he had a telephone call from Donovan. "The bank dicks have landed Stafford," said the inspector grimly, plainly chagrined that some one else had done what he had set his men out to do. "He has the goods on him, and he'll get a stretch up the river, but——"

"The girl——" Larry's heart gave a sudden throb which puzzled him. He waited anxiously for the answer.

"She wasn't with him. He claims to know nothing about where she is, nor where she has been any of the time since he left."

"Great Scott!"

"Beat it downtown as quick as possible; let's see if we can't fall down on finding her, too. You've run into a blind alley thinking this bird killed the Englishman. Guess again, son." Donovan's sarcasm was lost on Larry, however, for that young man was rubbing his hands delightedly and blessing a certain brassy-haired little damsel for her faith in her friend's integrity.

Tom Stafford proved to be sullen and taciturn; he admitted to taking the bank's money, but refused to speak of the girl or his wife. When Larry asked him how well he had known the dead man his face became a mask, only his dark eyes seemed alive. "What the devil are you asking me about him for?" he muttered coarsely.

Larry sat down beside him on the board, which was a substitute bed, and glanced calmly about the dingy cell.

"Don't you know, old man, that if the bank dicks hadn't fetched you back the city authorities would have done so on account of Norman Leigh's murder?"

Stafford shifted uneasily; he studied the toe of his shoe for a few seconds before replying.

"Why do they want to pin that on me?" he asked quietly. "Surely not because I resented his hanging around my wife? Any decent man would. Oh, laugh if you like; I'm a thief according to law and my employers, but as God is my judge I never intended to be, and I was only trying to get back on Easy street again and pay my wife and sister-in-law the money I had borrowed from them. I had a sure-fire tip—old stuff I know, but——" He shrugged his shoulders and his face became blank again. "Well, I didn't kill Leigh. Get that straight, Mr. Detective; I had no more cause to kill him than half a dozen other

men whose women he had made a play for, not as much reason as some I know, for my wife had no use for him, and theirs liked him."

"What men, for instance?"

"That's your business to find out. I'm in enough trouble myself without trying to slip a noose around some other poor devil's throat."

Larry laughed.

"You must have a pretty good alibi, Mr. Stafford."

"Best in the world. I wasn't even in New York the night, or whenever it was, the man was killed."

"I beg your pardon. It was the following day your wife received the letter from her sister about your elopement." Stafford smiled, just a drawing back of one side of his mouth. Larry continued: "You own and drive an aeroplane; the night of the discovery of the body I was out at your house, Mr. Stafford, and I heard that plane alight on your grounds. Do you mean to tell me you were not in it?"

"That's another question you'll have to answer yourself." Stafford turned away. "I'm up against it so far as the money is concerned, but until I'm arrested for murder I'm going to keep my mouth shut."

CHAPTER EIGHT

As he left the cell where Stafford was confined the detective came face to face in the corridor with two heavily veiled women whose figures were disguised by enveloping motor coats. He hesitated abruptly. There was no doubt of the taller one's identity; he took a chance on addressing the shorter.

"Miss Cassidy!"

She started, and the hand resting on her companion's arm trembled so violently he knew his conjecture was correct. Mrs. Stafford gave the girl a little push as though to draw her aside, but Larry stepped closer.

"When did you return, Miss Cassidy?"

Dorothy flung back her shadowing veil, disclosing reddened lids and pallid cheeks.

"Please, Mr. Tracy," she said in a choking voice. "Need we stand here and talk?"

"It's very necessary that your sister answer a few questions," replied the detective. "Your husband stands in grave danger of being accused of murder."

The woman swayed, Lillian gave a little cry and placed her arm about her.

"Norman Leigh's murder," Larry continued relentlessly.

Lillian waved a little gloved hand toward him in a protesting gesture for him to be silent.

"Mr. Tracy," she said softly, "I—I—I'll tell you a lot of things if you'll take me somewhere where we can be alone. I can't talk here. I made a terrible, terrible mistake in running away; I don't want to make another. I—I believe you are my friend." Her voice wavered.

The officer laid his hand on her quivering one, giving it a reassuring pressure.

"You bet I'm your friend," he said heartily. "Where shall we go?"

"My car is outside," Mrs. Stafford said. "We might as well use it while we can."

After they were in the car Larry decided that his own rooms were as convenient and certainly more private than any other place he could suggest. When he mentioned going there it met with the approval of both women.

The short distance was ridden in silence. Not until they were well inside the small, typically masculine apartment, veils and cloaks thrown aside, did Lillian break the silence.

Hands clasped in the lap of her black crape gown, small face flushed with excitement, she spoke.

"Larry Tracy," she half sobbed—and Larry thrilled at his Christian name on her lips—"I came home yesterday. Dorothy has told me that she showed you the letter I wrote her and that you thought—well, you see, I never went away with Tom at all."

"I know that," Larry said quietly. "I couldn't imagine you doing such a thing."

She bowed her head in gratitude.

"Even Dorothy didn't quite understand. She——" Her lips trembled, so she could not continue.

"Lillian did a very foolish Quixotic thing, Mr. Tracy," Dorothy Stafford said. "She did it thinking to save me and because she thought my husband had killed Norman

Leigh. I think she was almost insane or she would have realized that her treachery to me would hurt me as much as the knowledge my husband was a criminal."

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand either," Larry ventured. "Why did she think your husband killed Leigh?"

Lillian rose and began to pace back and forth the length of the room.

"It's this way; you know the day I met you, Mr. Tracy? You remember how you told Dottie and me that you were trying to find the jeweler who had sold the murdered man an emerald set in silver? Well, I instantly recalled seeing a ring like that on the finger of a Mr. Leigh, who sometimes called on—called at our house. I don't know why I didn't mention the fact to you; a premonition of what was coming perhaps, and then somehow from the way you described the dead man, I—I—figured even then it—he—was Norman Leigh. I wasn't surprised that he was dead, for he wasn't—er—quite nice; my brother-in-law had told him just the week before not to come to our house again. So I think I let my imagination run away with me, knowing that Tom was an aviator, inclined to be jealous and quick-tempered—and Dorothy had flirted with Mr. Leigh. Yes, you had, Dorothy. I was all nerves by the time I got home. I wished just awfully that I hadn't promised to go to the theatre with you. Dorothy wasn't downstairs when I came in the house, so I went upstairs to her room; she wasn't there either, but there was a note pinned to a cushion on a chaise longue she always used. It was in a sealed envelope and the writing was Tom's. I knew I had no right to open it, that its contents were only intended for Dorothy's eyes, but somehow I just got sick and dizzy when I saw it; I knew something terrible had happened; I felt it before I ever tore open the flap. I wanted to spare her. It was awful. Tom wrote her that he had taken the bank's money to speculate with; he said he thought by doing it he could win back the money he had used of Dorothy's and mine; naturally he had intended to return the bank's money. But instead everything was swept away. He saw no chance of escaping detection, and he knew what sister would think, so he decided to take enough more to make it worth his while, and got away while he could; then he added: 'I guess I've cooked Leigh's goose; you'll not be bothered with him again.' That was what scared me to death. Dorothy just adored him in spite of the way he had run through all our money, and I knew that even if she learned he had turned thief she would stick to him; but if she learned he had murdered Norman Leigh through jealousy of her it would kill her. I felt sure he had done it. I ran out to the shed where he kept his plane, but it wasn't there, so I felt certain he had gone away in it. I tore up the letter he had written to Dorothy; I did not want even that bit of incriminating evidence to fall into her hand. Then I thought and thought what I should do. I simply couldn't let her know he had become a common embezzler and had deserted her, even though he did swear in the letter that he worshipped her and would make good and come back for her some day. While I was trying to think what to do, my mind working on a dozen schemes, I saw some blood on the ground. I knew it was blood, for some of it had dropped on a piece of white paper and had turned it red."

"By George!" Larry exclaimed.

"I almost fainted. I just wanted to stand there and scream and scream. I don't know why I was so certain it was Norman Leigh's blood, but I was. Then I saw some more of it. I seemed to see it every place. I took the hose and tried to wash it away, getting more afraid every minute. Then suddenly it occurred to me that if it appeared that Tom and I had eloped together that would be enough reason for his absence; that if people thought he was in love with me, they surely could not think he had killed a man because of his attentions to his wife. It was a crazy thing to do, I know it now, because I was just trying to save Dorothy pain. I didn't even think how my apparent treachery would hurt her. I was desperate sorry then that I had promised to go to the theatre with you, Mr. Tracy, yet I dared not fail to appear; I knew positively that you had just made the engagement to learn something from me, and I knew I must act innocent. That evening was the most awful agony I ever endured in my life. When you suggested driving out with me I had visions of you going right out to the shed and

finding those bloodstains even though I had washed them away. I've no idea what I said to you during that ride home. No doubt I was terribly rude. Poor Dorothy, light-hearted and unsuspecting, welcomed you; I didn't want you to see her. When I left you I ran upstairs to my room, snatched up the bag I had already packed, put on my hat and coat and ran away in the taxi you had waiting at our door. Did you miss it?"

"Yes," Larry nodded, "I had to hang around an hour at the electric station waiting for a train."

"I left a note for Dorothy saying I had gone away with Tom," Lillian continued. "I don't know what I intended doing; I didn't have much money, but I wanted to get away that night so that it would appear we had left on the same day——"

Larry turned to Dorothy, interrupting the other girl. "If your husband went away in his aeroplane, Mrs. Stafford, what machine was it I heard descend into your grounds that night?"

"My husband's," she answered quickly.

"He had returned?"

"No, I waited and waited for him to come into the house, but he didn't. Later I went out to the hangar to see if anything had happened. The plane was there, but no Tom. Then I went upstairs to talk to Lillian, feeling terribly worried. There I found the note I have already shown you."

"Poor Dorothy," said the younger girl penitently.

CHAPTER NINE

THERE was silence in the room for some little time after Lillian ceased speaking. Dorothy rose and, crossing to the window, pulled back the curtains. Larry struck a match and lighted a cigarette. The crackling of the little flame rasped unpleasantly in the semi-darkness. He spoke first.

"Do you know, Miss Lillian, you have woven a story of damnably convicting evidence against your sister's husband?"

"It would be," she answered quietly, "if Tom had been here the day that Norman Leigh was murdered, but it is a fact that he wasn't."

"How do you know?"

"The letter he wrote to Dorothy was dated the day before."

"You destroyed that."

"Yes, I know. Two days before he told Dorothy he was going to Philadelphia on business. She went into New York to see a friend, and did not return until the evening I went to the theatre with you. That is how she missed finding Tom's letter. He didn't go to Philadelphia when he said he was going to, but knowing she was away came home, packed his things, wrote that letter and, having left it for her, went to Washington."

"Washington?"

"Yes."

"How do you know all this?"

"Tom told me. He didn't pin the note on the cushion himself; he just laid it there. Old Molly, our housekeeper, was out picking at some rosebushes that grew under Dorothy's window, when a gust of wind blew the letter out, where it fell at her feet. She picked it up, figured that it was important and, going upstairs, pinned it to the cushion herself. That was two days before I found it."

Larry smiled.

"But, my dear child, that doesn't prove that Mr. Stafford wasn't in this vicinty. Where was his plane?"

"In the hangar. Don't you see, Mr. Tracy, how strange that was? It wasn't there the night I left home, but when Dorothy went out to look for Tom it was. Now if Tom killed Mr. Leigh, he would have had to drop the body on the gas tank, wouldn't he? And to do that he would have had to use his plane, wouldn't he? But his plane was at home." She leaned forward eagerly, her lips parted, her eyes aglow with the enthusiasm in her argument.

"But some one did use that plane, Miss Lillian, if as you say there was blood—— If in the case Mr. Stafford did not, some one must have borrowed it."

"Then why?" The girl stared at him in wide-eyed bewilderment. Dorothy turned abruptly from the window; there was a peculiar expression in her long white-lidded eyes.

"You were away to work during the day,

weren't you?" continued the young detective, apparently not noticing the older woman, but in reality registering every facial play. "You say your sister was in New York? How do you know the plane stayed stationary?"

"Molly says——" began Lillian.

"Molly is almost stone deaf," snapped her sister. "Mr. Tracy, I've been an utter fool. I don't like to accuse nor even breathe a suspicion against a person until I am certain he is guilty, but—I think—I hope—I know who killed Norman Leigh."

"Dorothy!" shrilled the younger girl.

Dorothy did not look at her, she laid a gloved hand on Larry's. "Can you go out to my place now? Maybe we aren't too late. Can you come?"

"Of course. Who is it you suspect?"

"Wait, I want you to do the judging."

CHAPTER TEN

BEFORE they reached the stucco cottage Larry knew that they were going to John England's. As the car turned into the pebbled driveway, he said quietly to Mrs. Stafford: "My dear lady, if you think Mr. England is the man who killed Leigh, I must tell you you are mistaken; England could not drive a plane, nor is he the type to commit murder."

"You know him?" Dorothy inquired, raising her eyes from the wheel she was steering. She smiled knowingly, but continued in the direction they were going.

"Dorothy!" exclaimed the younger girl suddenly, "you don't think—oh—gracious heavens—why didn't I realize it before?" She suddenly began to sob, and Larry looked from one woman to the other in utter bewilderment.

John England himself greeted them on the portico which surrounded the better portion of the house. He seemed to know what they had come for, for his face was very pale, and a reserved dignity had taken the place of the loquacious manner with which he had welcomed Larry before.

He shook the woman's hands and smiled at the detective, but the smile was lacking in warmth. Opening the front door, he invited them to enter.

"Well?" glancing in turn from one member of the group to another.

"Oh, Mr. England," half sobbed Dorothy, "you know all about Tom?"

"Yes, my dear."

"And that they think he killed Norman Leigh?" She leaned forward breathlessly.

The tall, angular man stiffened.

"Have they accused him yet?" he suddenly asked.

"That is why Lillian ran away; she thought to save him and me."

England's dark eyes, kindly and shrewd, turned toward the young girl; "I did not think you could do what you so frankly claimed you had done," he said.

"We are fencing." Larry spoke up impatiently. "I don't like to appear hasty, Mrs. Stafford, "but every moment means business where your husband is concerned. You think you know who committed the murder?"

"I hope you aren't going to accuse me, Dorothy," drawled England reproachfully.

"No, I'm not, but you know who did it, and you are shielding him. Oh, please, please, John, for the friendship you bear me and my husband, tell Mr. Tracy the whole truth."

The man did not seem at all disconcerted. He smiled at Larry as though to say what foolish things are women, slowly lighted a cigarette, then turning abruptly placed his hand on the sobbing woman's shoulder.

"Mr. Detective, what are you going to do to me?" he inquired almost casually. "You see, I am a sort of accessory after the fact, for I know who killled that damned skunk and I helped him to go away. Oh, yes, he is gone now, and I've serious doubts whether you law birds will ever lay your hands on him, and I'm jolly well hoping you don't."

"Then it was—Ted?" whispered Lillian.

"Yes."

"Oh, how could he do this to Tom?" gasped Dorothy.

"He knew that Tom could clear himself, prove an alibi, also he knew that if Tom were arrested I was going to tell the truth. Mr. Tracy, Ted is my adopted son; I love him as if he were my own, so you will understand my interest in this matter, and why I kept silent

until I was sure he was safely out of this country."

"Do you know where he is now?"

"I do not, sir. Even were he inclined to have done so, I would not have let him tell me, but I'm quite positive he is safe so far as being brought back here for the murder."

"Suppose you explain everything, Mr. England," said the detective.

"Ted and Tom Stafford were buddies in France, both flyers. Both men left charming and attractive wives at home, the difference being that Tom's wife was well provided for, while Ted's was forced to do some work to add to her slender income. Ted is only a youth and had scarcely gotten started in life when the war broke out. Ruth became a stenographer, taking up the occupation she had followed before her marriage. She entered the employ of Norman Leigh. Well, it's just the same rotten old story, with this difference: I, who had been a friend of Leigh, traveling with him in China, etc. (that's how I came to have a ring similar to his), introduced her to him. The whole affair weighed so on the girl, that just after Ted's return she confessed everything to him and killed herself. You can imagine the boy's feelings. He had had a bad fall, and was in a pretty bad condition physically, his old position was gone and a new one was not forthcoming; this shock seemed to unbalance him. He came to stay with me. Tom, like the good scout he was, let him putter around his plane."

"By George!" Larry exclaimed, "he knew who the man was all the time, that's why he wouldn't talk!"

England nodded. "Then the boy seemed to brace up. He found work with the gas company." Again the detective started. "Yes, you've seen him, he went up with you on the day you discovered the body. Rather a coincidence, wasn't it?"

"Great Scott! What a boob I was! How long have you known he killed this man, Leigh?"

"I suspected it the moment I heard of the murder and the identity of the man was proven. I gave him money to leave the country, and told him as soon as I felt he was safe I was going to tell the truth. As a matter of fact, he isn't wholly sane."

"A very *sanely planned murder*, Mr. England. I'm curious to know the details."

England briefly explained as much of the sordid tragedy as his adopted son had told him. The young man had hunted out the roué, who, never having seen him, did not associate him with the little typist. Apparently they became friends; on what basis this friendship was formed England did not know. Ted often borrowed the plane of his neighbor to take little trips about the island and over Manhattan; he took the Englishman on one of these; that is the way the latter met his death. It was a premeditated, cold-blooded shooting him in the air away from every one. A dangerous thing for the other man to do, for he took his own life in his hands as he did it. It was night, yet he landed on a field with which he was familiar, stripped the body to hide its identity, but could not remove the ring, tied a stone to the legs and ascended again. He flung the bundle of clothing into the Hudson, and intended to do the same with the body, but a diabolical sense of humor made him change his mind, and he placed it on the gas tank for all passers-by to see.

"That shows the lad was insane," said the older man in conclusion, "no well-balanced mind could have conceived of such a thing, let alone executed it."

Through the assistance of friends Dorothy and Lillian returned the money to the bank which Tom Stafford had taken. His sentence was short, but long before he was again in the heart of his family, in the arms of the woman whom he had wronged, but who still adored him, faults and all, Larry Tracy had married the little self-sacrificing sister, and Lillian was slowly but surely regaining trust and happiness.

Somewhere in the Eastern hemisphere Ted England is still a free man; that is, if he still lives. The adopted father who aided in his escape, though third-degreed and grilled again and again, stuck to the story he told, and the young man's disappearance still remains a mystery.

Perhaps "justice was tempered with mercy" and the men on Ted's tracks feel that he had done a good deed in ridding the world of a scoundrel.

Mad-Stones

"DID you ever see a mad-stone?" inquired a well-known Cincinnati doctor of the writer.

"No."

"Well, I suppose you are aware of the existence of such a thing," he continued. "Mad-stones have been found in various places in the old world. East Indians call them snake stones, and they are supposed to be a specific for the bites of all sorts of poisonous serpents and animals. A few have been found in America, one especially, the snake stone of Virginia, being at one time in great repute. The owner of this stone, well aware of the superstitious faith of the ignorant people of his neighborhood, proposed to form a stock company of 200 shares at $10 each, and to make the stone the common property of the company. The necessary subscribers were soon secured, and the stone was given over to the keeping of the country doctor, who, being centrally located, was able to attend any patient on short notice, and such was the faith of these simple people in their mad-stone that they ever after held all rabid dogs and snakes in supreme contempt. The most certain thing about this transaction was the $2,000 received by the original owner."

"Is there really anything in them?"

"Well, it is about this way: You see, nineteen of every twenty dogs supposed to have the hydrophobia have nothing of the kind. Then the poison is contained in the saliva, and unless that is introduced into the blood there is no more danger from a rabid dog's bite than that of any other. For instance, there is Dr. F. W. Harper, of Lockland, O., a brother-in-law of James A. Bailey, the great showman, and a very sensible person; when he was a child he was bitten by a rabid dog. Animals bitten by this dog showed all the symptoms of hydrophobia and died in terrible convulsions, but this predestined doctor was taken to a mad-stone at Rising Sun, Ind., and after an almost human and intelligent action on the part of the stone, the child was returned home and never suffered any inconvenience from the bite.

"Of course this was regarded as a marvelous cure. But had these good people not been so much predisposed to believe in the stone they would have noticed that the child was probably bitten through some clothing, and the saliva had been wiped off of the animal's teeth by their passage through the fabric. It is thus that faith in the stones has been maintained. If by chance a person be really inoculated and die of the disease after having been treated with the stone, the fault all lies with the unskillful application of the stone.

"The moral effect of the stone is, undoubtedly, beneficial, as it is claimed by physicians that this disease is almost wholly caused by the mind; that is, the person fears he will have the hydrophobia, and the body is thus placed in the most favorable condition for the development of the microbes.

"It is thought by many that were a person to say deliberately and firmly, 'I will not go mad,' and have sufficient strength of mind to keep this idea predominant, he would allow himself to be bitten by a rabid dog with impunity. And, indeed, there is one case on record where a man in the agony of convulsions locked himself in a room, and, putting his reason against the madness in his brain, came off victor in a horrible struggle in which his raven black hair turned to snowy whiteness in a few minutes."

"What is the stone like?" asked the writer.

"The real snake stone is rather more than an inch long and about five-sixths of an inch broad, of a bluish or slaty color and a flattish shape. The one at Rising Sun, Ind., as I have often heard it described by Morgan Wamsley, the schoolteacher at Cleves, Ohio, a nephew of the lady who owns the stone, is very small

and white. It was taken, I believe, from a deer that was killed by the lady's father."

"What is the process of treatment?"

"Well, these stones are full of very fine pores, and after being carefully washed in warm, new milk, are applied to the wound. If the wound be made by a rabid dog, the stone will stick and draw out the poison until it can contain no more, when it drops off, and is immediately washed in clean, sweet milk. The poison is washed out and the milk becomes green. It is washed and rewashed until the milk is no longer affected, and is again applied to the wound. This is repeathed until the stone refuses to adhere, thus indicating that there is no more poison in the wound."

"Are there any people nowadays who believe in the stones?"

"Are there? Well, I should say so! There are hundreds of people right here who scoff at Pasteur, but who are ready to swear by the mad-stone. No, the fools are not all dead yet, and I understand that there is one of the stones somewhere in the city, but have never seen it."

QUEER CUSTOMS OF NEW HEBRIDES NATIVES

THE inhabitants of Hebrides, composed of 12 large and 100 smaller islands, believe in witchcraft and all sorts of signs and omens, particularly in the spirits of their departed ancestors and in gods, which are thought to be incorporated in certain stones or animals. Every village has its dancing-ground. Here the natives meet on moonlight nights and perform wild and fantastic antics to the booming of their deep drums, some of which, 6 feet or more in height and carved from the trunks of trees, are capable of making terrible noises.

One fantastic rite among them is the memoralizing of their chiefs in effigy. A crude statue of clay and fiber, representing the flesh and hair of the chief as he looked in real life, is made, his actual skull being used for the framework of the head, and around this the festivities take place.

They are below the medium in stature and accentuate the ugliness in their broad, black faces and receding foreheads by sticking cocoanut fiber in their hair and adorning their ears and flat noses with rings. They pride themselves upon their weapons—spears, clubs, bows and poisoned arrows.

The women hold a low position among them, the wives of the more important members of the race increasing the number of the skirts which they wear at one time as an indication of their rank, the "pooh-bah's" wife wearing as many as forty of them. The "better half" of a man is sometimes buried alive with her husband upon his death.

Quiros, the Portuguese navigator, in 1606, was the first white man to see the rugged outline of the coast of the islands, which rise abruptly out of the deep sea in the hurricane zone of the tropics. Believing he had discovered the great southern continent, which was at that time the dream of navigators, Quiros may be compared to Columbus, who thought he had found a route to India when he sighted the palm-fringed shores of the West Indies

He called his discovery Australia del Espiritu Santo, which has been shortened by traders to Santo and is applied to the largest island of the group. Some of the other large mountainous and partly volcanic islands are Ambrym, Annatam, Aurora, Api, Pentecost, Eromanga, Mallicollo and Tanna, the home of the "great lighthouse of the Southern Isles," Tanna volcano, which bursts forth brilliantly every three or four minutes.

Countless streams cut Santo, which is 64 miles long and 32 miles wide, into broad, fertile valleys. From its shores and those of the neighboring islands tons of copra are sent to Sydney, Australia, and shipped from there to soapmakers the world over. Coffee, cocoa and vanilla, as well as tropical fruits, grow in abundance. Oranges are said to grow so large that both a man's hands can scarcely span one of them, and the pineapples of the islands sometimes weigh 20 pounds. So rich is the soil and luxuriant the vegetation that in many places 5,000 sheep can be kept on 2,000 acres of land.

ALIBI ABSOLUTE

by Hamilton Craigie & Walter Grahame

CHAPTER ONE

"I SENTENCE you to five years at hard labor," pronounced the judge, his thin, pale, aristocratic features working slightly, despite the studied remoteness of his tone, the detached interest of his professional manner.

He looked away for a moment as the prisoner at the bar of justice stepped down from the dock in the custody of the court officer.

He was a young man, this prisoner; he did not look like a criminal; there was a something in the square set of his shoulders, in his straight glance, in the carriage of his head which gave the lie to the evidence, incontrovertible as it was, which had proven him a thief, and the consort of thieves.

Perhaps something of this impression had remained with the magistrate—perhaps, if he thought of it, he wondered, just a little—but it was not his to speculate; the case must be decided according to the evidence, and the evidence had been but too conclusive.

With a smile of satisfaction Ben Dresdner, the detective, who secured Gawtrey's conviction, sauntered out of the courtroom.

As the prisoner, handcuffed to the court officer, made a slow way through the press of lawyers, spectators, and professional bondsmen, legal harpies, and the flotsam and jetsam of the courts, there arose suddenly a commotion—voices, lifted hands, a quick, brief turmoil, like an eddy in the crowd, as a young woman, her face dead-white, her eyes wide with the terror of realization, threw herself upon the prisoner.

"Hugh—Hugh—they're taking you from me!" she cried.

Murmuring endearments, he soothed her as best he might:

"There, there, Mary—girl!" he said, awkwardly, "it won't be long—it won't be so long; it won't be——"

He broke off abruptly, a slow tide of passion in his face, his eyes gray and hard as flint. For a moment it seemed that the very violence of his hard-held rage would burst his bonds. Then, with a quick, powerful heave of his huge shoulders, he was through the crowd, pulling the officer along with him in his charging rush, to halt before a short, squat, broad-shouldered individual whose smirking grin was replaced on the instant by a look of fear.

Deaf to the cries which eddied about them, the rapping of the judge's gavel, the strident clamor of confusion at his back, the prisoner thrust his face within an inch of his vis-à-vis.

"Framed—ha! Scoppini, you double-crossing hound!" he said evenly, between his teeth.

"Framed—ha! You—you toad! But let me tell—you—one—thing!" he jerked out, as the officer, recovering from his momentary surprise, pulled backward at his gyved wrist. "You—won't—get the girl—but—you'll get—yours—aplenty—when—I—come out——"

The swarthy face of the Sicilian—"Big Mike" Scoppini—turned to a pasty grayness—then cleared. He laughed harshly—a throaty guttural—shrugged—his pig eyes filmed an instant with wary alertness—then his face became its usual stolid mask—the inscrutable expression of its habitual blankness.

"Che sara—sara,"* he muttered, his hands palm outward in a characteristic gesture.

A faint sneer appeared at the corners of his mouth. He knew that he was safe—they might suspect, but suspicion was not proof. He had been too careful. Five years would be enough, and more than enough.

It had been too easy: the "plant"—the unbelievable credulousness, the weakness of young Gawtrey, his fondness for certain pastimes which are not entirely taboo even among the righteous on occasion—why, the fool had actually thought he was saving Big Mike from—the very place where he was—going now.

Time-worn devices: marked bills, the payment of money to a "stool," who did not even himself suspect Scoppini's hand—it had been perfect.

And the girl! Scoppini's shoe-button eyes glinted with the yellow stare of a tiger as his imagination visualized unspeakable delights—a glare which found its reflection in another face—the face of his henchman, lieutenant, rival: Snifter Joe Todeschi—a veiled yet burning look unseen and unsuspected, least of all by the padrone of Little West Twelfth.

They were gone now: the girl—and the man who had stood between. Five years—five centuries—he had played it safe—he *was* safe—safe for five years—and yet, somehow, the words persisted in a haunting echo at the back of his brain, coupled with a vague, half-felt concern: he was safe, he Big Mike Scoppini, was safe—*for five years*—and after that——

The reflection of his slow grin followed him as, his henchman at his heels, he strode arrogantly out of court.

* "What will be—will be."

CHAPTER TWO

FIVE years out of his life—five years away from all that he held most dear had etched Hugh Gawtrey's face with grim lines, bitter lines of brooding and grim anticipation. Now, however, as he swung easily up the worn stone steps of the house in Greenwich Village, his face was transfigured with a warm and eager light.

He had not heard from Mary in six months—she had moved several times, he knew, since his departure from the city. The house was a mean house in a mean street. And as he mounted the steps a vague unease, a daunting apprehension, assailed him: a suggestion of the sinister emanating from the shuttered windows, the corroded railings, the worm-eaten portal with its knocker of blackened brass. He did not see Detective Dresdner watching him from across the street nor did he know that the officer had shadowed him all the way from the railroad depot when he first reached the city.

With his hand upon the bell-pull, a notice pasted against the window at Gawtrey's right arrested his attention. As the jangling discord of the old-fashioned bell quavered to nothingness he stared, uncomprehendingly, at the legend printed in sprawling characters on the dingy square of white:

House to Let—Inquire——

followed by the name of an agent in the vicinity.

As the full realization of the truth penetrated his brain a sudden, sickening fear clutched at his heart—in imagination he beheld what his heart told him was but too true. Stumbling down the steps, he stood a moment on the pavement in a curious blend of indecision and stark worry. Then came action.

At the real estate office, however, they could give him no information, nor did a searching canvass of the neighborhood uncover the slightest clue to Mary's whereabouts. All that he could learn was that she and her mother had left the old house six months back. That was when he had last heard from her.

Dresdner trailed him everywhere he went. If Gawtrey was going crooked he wanted to know it.

And in a city like New York it would be a nearly hopeless task to find her, if—if—she did not want to be found.

At the corner of a malodorous alley he had paused a moment in the thickening dusk, his brain questing like a squirrel on a treadmill, in his heart a black despair which was rapidly turning to a cold fury of hate.

It was then that he saw a face that he remembered: sharp, weazened, ratlike—the face of Snifter Joe Todeschi, henchman of Big Mike Scoppini. It had appeared and vanished in a breath, almost as if the man had been watching him, spying upon him—out of the noisome depths of the alley, peering outward like a foul spider, a toad, into the lesser shadows of the nearly empty street.

Gawtrey did not pause, but entered the alley at a crouching run. He did not know what he might meet, nor did he greatly care. Something told him that here was the man he wanted. As he advanced at a plunging run footsteps sounded before him like the patter of wind-blown leaves out of the dimness—a whispering seemed to begin about him—a sound like a hoarse chuckle echoed at his back from the pursuing detective.

But he went on. He might be going into a trap—he was almost certain of it—and then, even as this thought obtruded, a sharp hiss, as from a striking snake, was followed by a thin-drawn p-i-i-ng as something flashed past his head to bury itself in the board wall at his right with a muffled clang.

In this sinister, whispering mews of mystery death lingered in the startled air as he lunged forward, moved by instinct rather than by sense of sight or hearing. At any moment he expected to feel a knife thrust in the ribs, or the swift, searing impact of a bullet—and then—his hand had closed upon a bony shoulder; even as a flash of orange flame stabbbed the dark his fist got home on bone and flesh.

"Gawd!" came a voice. "Lemme up, Gawtrey—lemme up, I say—lemme——"

Footsteps ahead receded—died, as with a powerful, quick heave of his shoulder muscles he half dragged, half carried the limp body of the gangster into the dim light of a lamp post at the alley's mouth.

"Now—you rat," he said, evenly, as he propped the man against the lamp post, "come clean—you hear me? I want Big Mike Scoppini—and——"

The other, a mere bundle of bones and flabby flesh, held together merely by the potent stimulus of the heroin which he was never without, snarled in his face:

"T'hell wit' y'—Gawtrey—Mike's got y'r number, bo"—a slow grin appeared on his face—"he's got y'r number—an' as f'r th' jane——"

Gawtrey thrust his face within an inch of the other's.

"Snifter," he said, slowly and solemnly, "you know where Mary is, you toad—you tell me, and tell me the truth—or, so help me God, you'll never speak another word."

A cunning gleam, a venomous and sardonic flicker appeared for a moment in the eyes of the gunman which Gawtrey did not see. "She's—wit'—Big Mike," he said defiantly, "an' she ain't no bird in a gilded cage, neither—I'm tellin' you."

Gawtrey gave a groaning curse. He could not believe it—and yet there had been her long silence—the empty house—her poverty—a dependent mother. Life was suddenly a dust-bin of buried hopes—the world was mad—he was insane.

But there had been a ring of sincerity in the gangster's speech—or so it seemed. And there remained—revenge.

"Well—and where's Scoppini—now?" he asked, dully.

"At th' Rainbow—youse'll find 'im, all right."

Gawtrey turned, and like a blind man made his way out of the alley and along the street.

Dresdner tracked him to the club door and sauntered away thinking deeply.

Gawtrey burst into the club like a whirlwind, his blazing eyes set in a face dead-white. One swift, flashing glance told him that the man he wanted was not there. Where was he, then? He had not been in that day—or that night, several of the Rainbows told him, and somehow he knew that it was true.

It was getting on for eight o'clock when he left the club. He felt tired, worn, bruised, mentally and physically—his brain like a dull lump of lead, his heart a dull ache. Twice he stumbled as he made his way along the ave-

nue; he had not slept for a day and a night; nature was taking its toll.

It was just a little after eight when the lurid posters in front of a motion picture house caught his eye.

God—how tired he was! On an impulse that was half automatic he turned, and paying his quarter at the garishly ornate entrance, went in, found a seat, and sank into it with a weary sigh.

The first scenes of a Western drama were being projected on the screen. For a while Gawtrey watched in an apathy of dull interest. Then the heat and the close-packed assemblage began to have their effect upon him. Try as he would, he could not keep from nodding. And he did not try very hard.

The picture was buzzing along to its climax. A Mexican bandit who might have been Big Mike Scoppini in another incarnation glowered evilly at the heroine, who, cornered in a rude shack, resisted his advances with the pitiful inadequacy of her scant strength.

For a moment the analogy drew him from his increasing stupor with a muffled cry. Then, conscious that people were looking in his direction, he sank back once more, gazing with smarting eyes as the scene shifted.

Along a dusty trail galloped a cowpuncher; help was coming.

Through a fog of drowsiness Gawtrey saw him gallop up to the door of the shack, leap from his saddle.

He was awakened by a shrill feminine giggle behind him:

"Th' poor fish thinks dis is a lodgin'-house," was offered, audibly, to no one in particular. There came an answering titter, followed by an earnest "S-ssh!"

The ex-convict was broad awake now. Where had he heard that voice? It was, somehow, reminiscent of Mary, his Mary, by its very contrast with the tone of a voice he had known and loved—ages ago, it seemed. And for itself, there was something about it oddly familiar. For he had heard those contrasting voices before—and together!

But his eyes again sought the screen mechanically. The puncher was inside the shack now. A revolver flashed in his hand—the Mexican crumpled to the floor. The blonde heroine rushed into the eager arms of her rescuer. The figures faded out slowly—the picture was finished. The lights flashed up.

"Must be about nine o'clock," thought Gawtrey, heavily, as he started for the door. Behind him he did not hear the hurried exclamation, nor see the face, the eyes wide, staring in surprise, whose glance followed him as he went heavily down the aisle.

"It's him, sure enough—Gawtrey—Hugh Gawtrey. Wait a minute——"

But the words were drowned in the crashing dissonance of the one-man orchestrion. Gawtrey, curiously refreshed from his brief nap, lost in the departing crowd, went out into the night.

His mind was made up—or so he told himself. Mary—he would not think of her. Scoppini had left the city. His vengeance would have to keep. Sick in soul and body, for the moment his one thought was to get away—away from the memory which had been his in anticipation for five long years. He was young—and the young are not always steadfast—in real life—and heroes, even, have their moments of let-down from the high plane of sacrifice and derring-do.

Before his mind's-eye there arose again a vision of broad fields of waving grain, and of himself in overalls, the prison pallor of his lined face usurped by ruddy brown; the call of the clean outdoors; the lure of the farm in Alberta which had sustained him during the long months of his bitter servitude.

But then the vision had included another—now, he thought of it merely as an escape from the hell of memory that was closing about him—just a place to go—somewhere out—beyond—and that was all.

There was a train for Montreal at ten o'clock. He decided to go to the station and wait until it was made up.

CHAPTER THREE

ACROSS the avenue, at the mouth of a dark alley that led to the side door of the Rainbow Club, a crowd had gathered. But Gawtrey's one thought was to get away from the old scenes and the old life, and he started

down the avenue, head on his chest, at a quick, shuffling walk.

Midway of the block there came a clumping tread behind him—a heavy hand on his shoulder brought him to an abrupt halt. Gawtrey's heart hammmered in his throat, gave a sickening lurch, as, swinging short round, he looked into the hard face of Ben Dresdner, the plain-clothes man.

"Don't you start nothin'," advised Dresdner. "Just come back here a ways with me. I want you to see something."

"You've nothing on me, Dresdner," protested Gawtrey, bitterly. "I've done my finniff*—I've served my time in hell—and you know it. I'm leaving your damned crooks' town for good. I'm going West to-night. Take your paw off my shoulder."

"Now—ain't that lovely?" demanded Dresdner, rhetorically, with heavy sarcasm. "You just mosey back to the Rainbow Club with me, bo—that's all. Th' Big Boss wants to see you."

Gawtrey went. The crowd at the alley's mouth made way for them. In the alley, huddled grotesquely on the cobbles, lay a still figure. At its head was a black pool.

Gawtrey stared into the man's face. Then he gave a little cry:

"Big Mike!" he exclaimed.

The padrone had not left the city, then—they had lied to him, after all. But—but—where was Mary? A wild hope, an illogical hope, flamed and died in his breast.

Dresdner pushed Gawtrey up to a man with a red, veined face and eyes agate-hard.

"Here's th' guy that croaked him, Inspector," he stated. "Hugh Gawtrey—just out of th' band-house. Scoppini sent him there—squealed to me—and Gawtrey swore he'd get 'im. You remember, sir. Caught him beating it down th' avenoo a couple minutes ago. Said he was headin' West—handed me some guff about leavin' this 'crooks town' f'r good. F'r th' good of the town, I'll say."

He laughed grimly.

The inspector bent upon Gawtrey a menacing look. Then he thrust an automatic pistol almost in his face.

"Your gat, ain't it?" he demanded, harshly.

"Chucked it over th' fence after you got this bird, didn't yah?"

"No, it isn't," began Gawtrey, "and I didn't——"

"When did you land in town—an' what you been doing since then?" interrupted the inspector.

Haltingly, Gawtrey told of his unsuccessful search for Mary—his meeting with Todeschi in the alley—his visit to the motion picture theatre.

Dresdner corroborated this much of the accounting.

"An' you expect us to believe all that, hey?" sneered the inspector. "Well—you went into th' movie at eight, you say," he resumed. *"How long did you stay there?"*

A little silence fell—a breathless pause.

"Well, I don't just remember," replied Gawtrey, easier in his mind now that it apppeared that he had established an alibi. "I haven't any watch, you know; just saw the show through."

"Exactly what time did this happen?" asked the inspector of Dresdner, with a flirt of his thumb toward the body of the murdered man.

"Schultz, the delicatessen man on the floor below, says he heard the shot fifteen minutes ago. Joe, the bootblack, says he saw some one makin' a getaway over th' fence at the back of the alley right after that," answered Dresdner.

The inspector's quick eye picked out the face of the proprietor of the motion picture house in the crowd.

"Goldstein, how long does it take you to run your show through?" he asked.

"I'd say an hour, Inspector," replied Goldstein, promptly.

The Inspector turned back to Gawtrey: "That's one hot alibi of yours," he remarked disgustedly. "You went into th' movie at eight, you say—saw th' show through, didn't you? That'd be nine o'clock. Big Mike was killed less than half an hour ago—that's nine-thirty. Where were you *then*, hey?"

"What's that you say?" gasped Gawtrey. "A frame-up again, is it? Why—it's not more than half-past nine now!"

"It ain't, hey?" snapped the inspector. "Look at that!" He thrust an ornate watch before Gawtrey's eyes. It was after ten o'clock.

* "Five years."

"Come clean now!" he blustered. "Where you been since nine o'clock?"

"I just came out of the movie a few minutes ago," muttered the suspect, heavily. Hope was dead in his breast. But, after all, what did it matter now? Nothing mattered.

"Yes—you did—like blazes!" snorted the inspector. "Put him in th' wagon, Ben. It's th' chair for him this trip. Two bad ones in one night—this man's town will be clean in a month if this keeps up."

In a stupor of dumb despair Gawtrey suffered Dresdner to lead him toward the "pie-wagon" that had clanged up to the curb before the front entrance of the club. But before they reached it there came an interruption. Two girls pushed through the crowd, the one assured, poised, instinct with the gaminerie of the streets; the other flushed, lovely, tear-stained, at sight of whom Gawtrey stared and stared—then found voice in a single cry in which was fused, it seemed, the gamut of every emotion:

"Mary!"

Then everything happened at once. It is difficult to report faithfully several different dialogues simultaneously, but the polyglot result would be something like this:

"Mary!"

"Hugh—dearest—at last!"

A whole vocabulary of passion in a phrase. A pause.

"Mamie told me, Hugh—she was at the movie—she saw you—we tried to find you—yes—I moved—to get away from Scoppini."

A policeman shouldered through the crowd, towing a cowering figure, limp, helpless—Snifter Joe Todeschi.

"Here's your man, Inspector," he stated. "Got him as he was boardin' th' rattler for Chi—— Sure, then, this other guy—" pointing to Gawtrey—"he didn't croak Big Mike."

"Then—he's innocent?" questioned a reporter, risen as if by magic out of the crowd.

"Innocent—nothing!" snarled the inspector, after a whispered conversation with the officer. "He didn't kill Scoppini—no—that's right enough—but he hired Snifter Joe to do the trick not half an hour ago, in Regan's place—that's a good twenty blocks from here—*while he was at th' movie*, accordin' to *his* say-so—that right, Todeschi?"

He turned to the gunman, who nodded a sullen acquiescence.

In a lightning flash, like the stoppage of a cinematograph, Gawtrey sensed rather than understood: Todeschi's lie, which, normally, he would not have credited; his ambition to supplant Scoppini; his own secret passion for the girl; his hope, doubtless, that either one or both of his rivals, Big Mike or Gawtrey, or both would suffer in the encounter. That was what had prompted this lie to Gawtrey—it was all clear—but—the proof—his own innocence—his heart sank, then leaped as there came the voice of Mamie, certain, assured, confident:

"Say, Inspector, Gawtrey's give y' a straight story. Me an' Til' Higgins here blew int' th' movie about nine o'clock an' sat down right behind him and come out th' same time, just a couple minutes ago—didn't we, Til'?" as a perfect replica, both as to accent and sartorial magnificence, appeared at her elbow.

"Surest thing y' know, dearie," agreed Til', nonchalantly. "Th' guy slept all the way through the show."

The Inspector gave a snort of disgust, jerked his thumb over his shoulder, and snarled at Gawtrey:

"Beat it. The alibi's absolute. We can't convict you!"

Measuring Space

THE number of tiny planets, whose orbits lie between those of Mars and Jupiter, mounts up year by year, and now approaches 1,000. The majority of them have no interest save to the professional astronomer, but it happens that three of very special interest have been under observation in recent months. The first of these is Eros, which was discovered by Dr. Witt of Berlin in 1898.

It was soon found that the orbit of this planet approaches that of the earth within 14,000,000 miles, or much nearer than any other planet. This makes it peculiarly adapted for determining the scale of the solar system, and in particular the distance of the sun, by means of simultaneous observations at distant observatories. It will not make one of its closest approaches till February, 1931; preparations are already being made for utilizing that important occasion to the utmost.

The much less close approach (some 28,000,000 miles) at the beginning of 1901 has already been used for this purpose, but the coming event should give a much more reliable determination.

There is a second method of finding the sun's distance from Eros: the earth disturbs its elliptical motion very largely, and it is possible to deduce the earth's mass compared with that of the sun, and, hence, to deduce the distance of the latter.

Calculations of this character have just been carried out by Dr. Witt and Mr. Noteboom. They find for the sun's distance by this method 92,897,000 miles, while the other method gives 92,822,000. Both figures are subject to revision after the observations of 1931, but it will be seen that the zone of uncertainty is already fairly small.

During the past sixty years the accepted estimate of the sun's distance has been changed from more than 95,000,000 miles to less than 93,000,000 miles. It is a great triumph to have got the uncertainty as small as it is, but every one hopes that 1931 will make it smaller still.

The second interesting planet is Alinda, discovered by Professor Wolf of Heidelberg in January, 1918. This planet approaches the earth's orbit nearly as closely as Eros does, but it has a much more eccentric orbit, so that it requires four years to complete its path, whereas Eros takes only 1 3-4 years. It is such a tiny body (some three miles in diameter) that it is utterly invisible save when within a few millions of miles of the earth, and it is a matter of considerable congratulation that it has now been re-observed after completing a revolution around the sun, so that the size and shape of its orbit are placed beyond doubt.

The third body was found in 1920 by Dr Baade of Bergedorf Observatory, Hamburg, and is found to have an orbit so extremely elongated that it extends practically from the path of Mars to that of Saturn, taking 13 1-3 years to complete the circuit. From this orbit one would be inclined to call it a comet, but there is absolutely no fuzziness in its appearance, so that the name comet (which means "hairy") is unsuitable. We may conjecture that it is a minor planet which at some time passed very close to Jupiter and had its orbit entirely changed by his powerful attraction.

FOUND ON THE FIFTH FLOOR

by

Peter Perry

IT was eleven o'clock at night in the rotunda of the Hotel Hartford. Suddenly from the balcony of the fifth floor a man's body shot out and fell. There was a sickening crash as it struck the marble floor, then rebounded, the limbs straightening out, and fell heavily, to remain motionless.

Glancing up, it seemed to me as if I caught a glimpse of a woman's face, horror-struck, with wide-opened, frightened, staring eyes, peering from behind a column near the spot from which the man had been hurled. But it was only a flashing vision and had vanished before I could be sure I had seen it.

"It's Arnold!" cried the manager, rushing to the body. "Did he jump? Was there any one else on the balcony?"

But no one had seen whether the man had jumped or been thrown and no one had seen anybody standing around on the fifth floor balcony.

"Dead," pronounced a doctor, bending over the body.

"Guard the doors. See that no one leaves the building! Call the police," ordered Andrews, manager of the Hartford, to his clerks and underlings. "Put boys on the stairs. Let no one leave the floor he is on." he commanded the head bellboy. Then, turning to me, "Come on, some of you fellows. We'll need some witnesses—maybe help."

He rushed to the elevator, several of us following. He pushed the stolid operator back into his cage. The elevator boy was a clumsy, bow-legged, red-faced fellow, short, but heavy set, with long, ape-like arms, called boy only for the sake of custom. I did not like his looks.

"Where were you, Fowler, when this happened?" Andrews asked him as the car shot up to the fifth floor.

"On second, sir. I came right down," he answered civilly enough.

Andrews and I were the first to step out of the elevator when the door was opened. Then suddenly the lights went out over the whole building and we were in total darkness.

"Damn!" yelled Andrews; "back to the basement!"

The electric switchboard was located in the basement. The door crashed to behind Andrews and the others—luckily the elevator power had not been shut off—and I was left alone on the fifth floor balcony.

"I struck a match, but it was knocked out of my hand by a quick, downward stroke from behind. I turned and grasped for my assailant, and clutched a handful of silky stuff and

then a woman's bare, soft arm. My fingers sank into the flesh, so unexpectedly yielding. Surprised, I relaxed my hold, and she brushed past me. I could hear her quick, frightened breathing. Somewhere down the corridor a door closed softly.

There was no excitement on the fifth floor. No one evidently had heard the struggle, if there had been one, or knew of the tragedy. A man opened his door and called impatiently for lights. Then the lights were flashed back on and I saw his pajama-clad legs disappear hurriedly behind his door. There was no sign of any struggle on the balcony. I did not know which room was Arnold's, so I was forced to wait for the return of Manager Andrews.

Far below on the marble floor of the lobby the body still lay as it had fallen, with an awe-struck group surrounding it. The women had fled to the parlors, and only men remained in the foyer, moving about restlessly and whispering together in excited little groups. One man I noticed in a dark suit who sat calmly apart in one of the big armchairs rubbing his hands on his pocket-handkerchief. His back was turned to the spectacle of the lifeless body. The sound of the orchestra came faintly from behind the locked doors of the dining-room, where the diners remained ignorant of Arnold's death.

Andrews soon returned. Another elevator came up at the same time, bearing a group of men and hotel employees that Andrews had summoned.

"Who could have turned that switch?" he was grumbling. "Couldn't find a trace of him; left the fellows searching. Anything happen up here?"

"No." I lied. I knew no woman's arms could have possessed the strength that hurled Arnold over the balustrade.

"Here's his room—513," announced Andrews.

The door was locked and the key out. We waited a long second while the manager fumbled with his pass-key before he swung open the door and switched on the light. The room was in disorder, drawers and bags had been opened and searched in haste, but there was no sign of a struggle. The windows were open and a soft breeze stirred the curtains, but a sweet, heavy odor seemed to permeate the air.

"Chloroform," sniffed Andrews. There was no mistaking the odor.

"Chloroformed in his sleep," suggested some one.

"That bed hasn't been slept on," contradicted Andrews. "There might have been a fight in here and no one have heard it; the walls are very nearly sound-proof. But we can't do any good arguing here. Search all the rooms on this floor; the quicker, the better. We are losing valuable time."

Just then the elevator discharged an excited bellboy who approached Andrews, chattering volubly as he advanced.

"Mr. Andrews, there's a guy down there what says this Arnold feller drew eight thousand dollars outen the bank to-day, and he was going to pay it to him to-night. He come here to-night to settle up on a deal. He said he wouldn't take nothing but cash from Arnold, because he was crooked. And the eight thousand ain't on him now; they searched him; nothing but some little change."

"Did they find his room key?" asked Andrews.

"No, sir; I didn't see no key. And this guy——"

"That'll do," Andrews interrupted him. "Search these rooms now, you fellows, and keep a lookout for that eight thousand."

Our little group scattered hurriedly down the long corridors. Turning, I noticed the young man who had called so impatiently for lights, now clad in a dressing gown, standing in his doorway, evidently attracted by the bellboy's loud, excited tones.

"We'll start here," said Andrews. And then to the young man: "There has been murder and robbery on this floor. I ask permission to search your room."

The young man stared at him blankly, and his face went white.

"You'll not search my room. You have no authority," he said defiantly.

"What reason have you for refusing?" Andrews demanded sternly.

"I'll not answer," the young man replied quite firmly and drew back, shutting the door in our faces.

"Humph!" grunted Andrews, "smart young

snob! You watch that door till the police come," he ordered me. "That's Gaylord Harrison, son of the railroad man, fresh young upstart, damn snob," he muttered as he proceeded down the corridor.

I took up my position behind one of the large columns on the balcony where I could watch the door and also the lobby below. I reflected on the information which Andrews had just imparted. The name of Gaylord Harrison had been much in the newspapers of late. His father had just disinherited him after he had figured largely in a series of wild escapades and had been arrested in a raid on a notorious gambling house. He had sowed his wild oats with a relish, and had now come West, presumably to make good after his father had turned him out.

Presently my attention was attracted by the arrival of the police below. I glanced at the huge clock in the lobby. It had been only seven minutes since Arnold had been sent plunging over the balcony, and I had thought the police slow.

A slight metallic sound from behind startled me, and I turned just in time to catch a glimpse of Gaylord Harrison at the mail chute. It was the sound of the cover to the slot being lifted that had caught my ear. He dropped two bunches of letters into the opening, and I saw them falling down the glass chute, half a dozen of them at least, I reckoned. Then he slipped hurriedly back into his room—the whole performance had not taken ten seconds—just as a squad of police stepped out of the elevator onto the fifth floor balcony.

At the same time Andrews emerged from a door down the corridor, escorting a girl in a green negligee. She was frightened and half hysterical, and her glance wandered constantly in search of a friend or a way of escape.

Andrews held out a handful of letters and a key to the chief of the squad, whom he addressed as Hodges.

"Found Arnold's key and these letters in this lady's dresser," he said coolly.

"H'm! Addressed to Arnold," Hodges remarked, stuffing the letters and key in his pocket. Then to one of his men: "Look after this woman till I get time to question her," he ordered.

The man grasped her roughly by the arm to lead her back to her room.

"I'll go," she said proudly. "You don't need to hold me like that." She raised her other arm to push his hand away; her sleeve fell back from her forearm and I caught a glimpse of several dark bruises, like fingerprints. I shifted my gaze instantly, but Hodges had seen it, too. He pushed back her sleeve.

"H'm! Struggle," he commented.

It was the girl I had encountered in the dark; I had grasped her arm just there. I opened my mouth to contradict their suspicions, then realized that my evidence could be of no assistance to her and might only complicate matters. The girl, too, said nothing. What explanation could she give for striking the lighted match out of my hand? I realized, too, that she had come from the direction of Arnold's room.

The police were already making a search of the floor, while Andrews reported to Hodges the circumstances of the case and what little we had done. And I found opportunity to tell them of my discovery of Harrison's visit to the letter drop and the numerous letters he had mailed.

"The postman is due here in a few minutes for the last collection," said Andrews. "Better send a man to stop him."

Hodges called one of his men. "When the postman makes his collection here tell him I want to look over the letters in this box. Phone the post-office for permission," he commanded and dismissed the fellow with a wave of his hand.

Harrison made no objection this time to his room being searched. Hodges went through his things quickly, while the young man looked on with an amused, supercilious smile. Nothing of an incriminating nature was found, as was to be expected.

"What was in those letters you mailed?" asked Hodges, turning on him so suddenly the man was for a moment perplexed.

Harrison lost his calm superiority for a moment. "Wh—what letters?" he stammered.

"Those you just dropped down the chute," Hodges said curtly.

"Something of a personal nature," replied Harrison, recovering to a certain extent his

usual arrogance. "You'll have to find that out for yourself if you want to know."

"All right," returned Hodges; "if you can't explain, I'll just hold you till I get a chance to look into them." And he snapped a pair of handcuffs on Harrison and locked him in his room. "I guess he'll be safe there for a while; no escape from those windows, eh?" he asked Andrews.

"Not a chance," grinned Andrews.

"Well, that's two," Hodges announced so complacently that I could not help retorting:

"That boy doesn't look like a murderer, and as for the girl——"

"Oho, what do you know about murderers, young fellow?"

I confessed my ignorance and was silent.

"But you said something at that," admitted Hodges; "boy and girl, man and woman; that will account for more murders than money."

"But the lights," I reminded him; "who turned the lights off, and why?"

"We'll get to that," he answered a bit impatiently. "Give us time; give us time."

He took himself very seriously, did Hodges. He proceeded gravely to inspect Arnold's room, but if he discovered anything more than we had he offered no comment. One of his assistants appeared in the doorway.

"The fire-escape in this corridor has been used recently, sir," he reported.

"How far down?"

"Couldn't say, sir. There were finger-prints, so I didn't go down."

"Go down by the elevator and see if he went to the bottom of the ladder," Hodges ordered the man. "I'll have a look at the finger-prints myself."

Andrews and I followed the chief down the corridor. He clambered through the window to the fire-escape, and the brilliant circle of his flashlight illuminating the iron framework plainly revealed recent finger-prints in the dust on the rungs of the ladder. He stooped down and examined them closely through a magnifying-glass.

"The smart rascal wore gloves," he complained. "But they were rough woollen ones; that's something, thanks to the dust." He drew chalk-marks around some of the prints.

"All the way to the bottom, sir," the man called up from below.

"Take a look down the alley," Hodges called back.

"Yes, sir."

"He made a quick getaway," said Hodges, "but we'll follow him." And he started down the ladder, examining the rungs on the way. "You fellows can follow or meet me below," he said to Andrews and me. We chose the elevator.

The fire-escape was at the rear of the hotel in the alley; a man could have easily made use of it at night without being observed. Almost directly beneath it a grating covered an areaway, and the light shone up through it faintly from the basement window. Hodges swung from the bottom of the ladder and dropped lightly on the grating. It rattled loosely in its casing.

"He got through the window to the basement," I exclaimed brilliantly.

"Exactly," replied Hodges, as if he had known it all the time. He lifted the grating easily, and the new scars on it show that it had recently been pried loose from its rusty frame.

"Planned it all before," remarked Hodges. He dropped down into the area and raised the sash, which was not locked. Andrews and I followed him into the basement.

"But why, when he was safely outside, did he come back and turn off the lights?" I persisted.

"We shall know in time," Hodges smiled confidently. "He had a reason."

"He wanted to get back in without being seen," Andrews suggested.

"Exactly what I think," replied Hodges, taking all the credit for the idea. "He didn't go back up the fire-escape. He didn't want to get away. He turned out the lights and came back to brazen it out."

There was nothing more to be discovered in the basement. So we returned to the lobby, where many of the guests were becoming impatient to get away on the eleven-thirty train. The commotion had already subsided. Arnold's body has been removed to an undertaker's. The dining-room doors had been thrown open and a policeman stationed there to take the names of those who came out, wondering and still ignorant of the tragedy. Everything again had the appearance of nor-

mal, but plain-clothes men kept watch everywhere, and there was a tenseness and an undercurrent of excitement in the air.

The man in the dark suit, whom I had noticed rubbing his hands so diligently a few minutes before, was now pacing restlessly up and down the floor. He hailed Andrews as soon as he caught sight of him.

"I've got to make that eleven-thirty train," he told him.

"All right, Miller, we'll see that you get it," the manager replied.

"Just a few questions to every one that goes out of here," interrupted Hodges. "Where were you at the time of the murder?"

"Here in the lobby," Miller answered.

"Get some one to verify that, and you are free to go," said Hodges.

"Perhaps you remember seeing me?" The man turned confidently to me.

I shook my head. "I had just come in," I felt obliged to add apologetically. I could not recall seeing him except from the balcony. But the man did not seem offended and strode away in search of some one else.

And another man who was anxious to get away came up to the desk. Hodges put the same questions to him.

"I was on the second floor waiting for the elevator. I hurried down the steps when I heard the commotion."

"Could you get some one to verify that?" asked Hodges.

"The elevator boy might remember the bell was ringing, if he wasn't asleep," replied the man. "I had waited for several minutes, and I rang it with variations."

"Why, Fowler said he was on second at the time," I broke in, recalling the elevator boy's long, powerful arms with a shudder.

"Send for him," ordered Hodges.

Andrews rang the bell. "He's on second now," he said, looking up. He rang the bell again. We waited impatiently. Some one started up the stairs. Then the cage descended and Fowler opened the door.

"Come here, Fowler," Andrews commanded.

"You say you were on second at the time of the murder?" Hodges questioned him.

"Yes, sir," Fowler replied, looking startled.

"And this man says he was ringing on second at the same time."

Fowler considered. "Well, it might have been third," he confessed. "You see, I—I was helping a man."

"How were you helping him?" Hodges demanded sternly.

But Fowler was spared the necessity of an answer. At that moment the detective, whom Hodges had left to guard the alley, entered disheveled and with a bleeding nose, but triumphantly leading his captive, who was in an even worse condition. The fellow had evidently put up a fight, but he had been subdued by a heavy blow on his head, and his face was smeared with blood from the wound. As soon as he came under the light we saw it was Gaylord Harrison.

"Well, how did you get away?" ejaculated Hodges.

"Caught him sliding out of a second floor window on a couple of sheets," his captor panted. "Somebody drew the sheets back up —northwest corner room," he finished triumphantly.

Hodges dispatched a couple of men with Andrews's keys to investigate the room from which Harrison had escaped.

"And go on up on fifth and see how he got out there," he called after them.

"Harrison was sullen and silent, but when he caught sight of Fowler he turned on him fiercely. "Had to squeal, did you?"

"Honest to God, I ain't said a word!" Fowler declared fervently.

"Well, it's all up anyway," Harrison growled as they snapped another pair of handcuffs on him. "I'm a fool! Everything I do only gets me in worse. Suppose you'll have a case against me now."

"Rather," Hodges responded grimly.

The two men returned from their search of the rooms. They brought the handcuffs that had been first placed on Harrison, both filed clear through.

"Sheets on the second floor stripped from the bed and knotted together," one of them reported tersely. "Found these handcuffs in the room on fifth. Both doors locked."

Hodges examined the handcuffs. "He couldn't have done that with a nail file held between his teeth. He had a good file and

help to do that job." He looked from Fowler to Harrison and back again. "Well? Out with it!" he commanded. But both were doggedly silent.

I saw Harrison glance furtively towards the mail box across the lobby which the postman was at that moment opening. In another minute its entire contents were laid on the desk for Hodges's inspection. He sifted through the letters quickly. It was an easy matter to sort out a group of envelopes of uniform size and quality addressed in the same handwriting. There were ten in all, addressed to different names, general delivery, at a town some hundred miles east.

"These are the ones we want," Hodges remarked, returning the others to the postman. "That your handwriting, Harrison?" he questioned the boy.

"Yes, that's my handwriting, and my money inside," Harrison rejoined warmly. "It isn't *his* money! I won that in a game in my room. It's exactly eight thousand! That's why I was afraid to have it found on me. I heard you say that was the amount missing. We were playing in my room; Fowler was in on it; that's where he was when the murder was committed. And he unlocked my door and filed my handcuffs and helped me to get out afterwards. And you're letting the real criminal get away while you waste time on me and a little poker game!"

The chief smiled as he tore open the envelopes and arranged the bills they contained in neat little piles. They ranged in denomination from one hundred to a thousand dollars.

"Rather high stakes for an elevator boy to be playing," Hodges remarked sarcastically.

"I wouldn't have enough to live on if I didn't make more than I get here," Fowler retorted. "And I can win and lose as well as rich guys," he added proudly.

"And who else was in this little—ah—poker game of yours, may I ask?" Hodges inquired pompously.

"You may ask, but you won't find out," replied Harrison coolly. "I won't get any others into trouble unless I have to."

"Well, maybe you'll tell the judge," returned Hodges. "Take care of them," he commanded two officers, who marched Harrison and Fowler off. Hodges gathered up the bills and moved over to the desk where one of his assistants and Andrews were questioning the guests who were leaving on the eleven-thirty. "I think we have all the evidence we need right here," he smiled complacently, waving the bills. "But you might as well go on with your examination. There might be others mixed up in it, too. If any of them get too uppish about it, just search them." He folded the bills and stowed them away carefully in his pocket.

"Wouldn't Arnold's bills likely have been all of the same denomination," I suggested.

Hodges looked at me so suspiciously that I felt almost as if I had implicated myself. "Where's that fellow that Arnold was to meet here?" he asked, ignoring my question. But when the man was produced he inquired if anything had been said about the size of the bills in which the eight thousand was to be paid.

"No, sir, nothing was said about that. I only stipulated that the sum should be in cash. Arnold was something of a rascal; had a doubtful reputation; I wouldn't accept his check."

"Do you know at what bank he secured the money?"

"No, sir."

"That's all." Hodges dismissed him. "The denomination of the bills is a small matter; he might have had them changed somewhere," he remarked carelessly, but I could see that the idea had stuck in his head and was puzzling him. "Well, I'll go up and question the girl," he decided, brightening up, "and see what her letters contain."

As soon as Hodges had departed the man in the dark suit came up to Andrews again. "I've only five minutes to catch my train," he said nervously.

"Yes, yes, Mr. Miller," Andrews agreed sympathetically. "Did you find the man you were talking to at the time——"

"He's already gone," explained Miller. "I saw him just as he was getting in a taxi. I called to him, but he didn't hear."

"Isn't there some one else here who noticed you before," suggested Andrews. "Sorry to have to go through this red tape, you know, but it's orders," he apologized.

"Yes, of course, of course," Miller replied

impatiently. "But I had just come in. Can't you make an exception? I've got to catch that train."

"It will be necessary to search you and your belongings then," the detective decided.

"Well, do it quick," Miller agreed. He seemed annoyed, but not unwilling as he followed the detective into the small room behind the office. I was left alone again with Andrews.

"I noticed that fellow from the balcony after the lights came on again, but I don't remember seeing him before," I mused. "He was sitting over there rubbing his hands on his handkerchief."

"I wonder why he couldn't find an alibi. He was the first one to want to get away. And he said he was talking to a man," Andrews went on. "Now, if he had said he had been reading a paper—no one notices a man behind a newspaper."

"Will they search his trunk, too?" I asked.

"Trunks are gone long ago," Andrews replied.

"Did they go before or after it happened?" I persisted.

"Now that's something we ought to know!" exclaimed Andrews, pounding his fist on the desk by way of emphasis. "I'll find out." He summoned a bellboy. "Did the trunks go before or after the murder?" he inquired.

"They were loading them when it happened, Mr. Andrews," the boy replied. "I was in there helping them. And Jim and I ran in here as soon as we heard the racket."

"Did this fellow Miller have a trunk?" Andrews asked.

"Yes, sir; Jim and I brought it down this morning."

"And left it in the baggage-room?"

"Yes, sir; we got it checked for him to San Francisco."

"Had you loaded it before the lights went off?"

"No, sir; I don't think so. We had just begun; just got two or three on."

"All right, kid. Much obliged," said Andrews, and the boy withdrew. "I think we had better have that trunk searched since he is so damn anxious to get away, don't you?" he continued in a low tone to me. "It wouldn't do any harm," he argued.

"Good idea," I agreed. "Does the baggage room open into the alley?"

"By Jove! it does, right by that basement window. And the door would have been open." He seized the telephone and began calling up the baggage office at the station. "Get that check," he commanded me.

Miller's face went gray when I asked him for the check, but he handed it over coolly enough. I repeated the number mentally and returned the check. The fellow had nerve anyway. But so far we had nothing against him but suspicions. I returned to Andrews and jotted the check number down on a slip of paper for him. He repeated it over the telephone.

"Have an officer search that trunk in connection with the Arnold murder. If any money or anything suspicious is found phone us immedately. We'll hold the owner here till we hear from you; it's Hodges's orders," he concluded.

"But think of the number of other trunks that were in there," I murmured doubtfully "Any one else might have done the same thing."

"But no one else that has left this hotel has had any trouble verifying their whereabouts half an hour ago," Andrews replied firmly.

"But why did he come back in when he could have just walked away?" I argued.

"Why he had to come back," Andrews declared. "The men were searching that alley as soon as we had the lights on."

Hodges returned elated. "Some love-letters that young woman writes, I'll say! Arnold brought her out here, promised to marry her as soon as she got a divorce, *she* says," he winked knowingly. "Said she had his key all the time. Then she shut up like a clam wouldn't say another word. But I have an idea she'd got tired of Arnold and threw him over for this young Harrison—bigger game; that's what she was after. And those two were going to take the money and beat it. That's the way I've got it all doped out. Pretty quick work for the police department, eh?"

So it was love-letters the girl was after when I had encountered her in the dark. She had heard the commotion and gone in his room after them to save herself from being implicated, I reasoned.

"But who turned out the lights?" I asked Hodges. "Harrison and Fowler both were on the fifth floor at the time."

"You know, I believe the girl did it," he whispered confidentially. "A girl would have worn gloves, now wouldn't she?"

I could have told him that the girl, too, was on the fifth floor while the lights were out, but that would only have strengthened Hodges's case against her.

The detective, having completed his search, brought Miller back into the office. "Couldn't find a thing," he announced.

Miller grabbed his bag and hastened to depart.

"Just a moment," Andrews called to him. "Hold him a while till they search his trunk at the station," he whispered to Hodges.

"What's your hurry? Come back here," commanded Hodges.

"Look here, I've just got five minutes to make that train. You can't hold me this way," Miller answered, now genuinely angry.

"Can't, eh?" threatened Hodges, aroused by his authority being questioned. "You just sit down there a while, and make yourself at home."

Reluctantly the man obeyed. The telephone rang, Andrews answered it and then turned it over to Hodges.

"Yes. What's that? You don't say!" cried Hodges. "Send that trunk over to headquarters. Quick work for——"

The sentence was not finished, for Miller had bolted and was fighting his way frantically towards the door. He shook off a dozen men. His strength was prodigious; he had lost his head and was taking a last desperate chance. But there could be no escape from such numbers, and he was soon overpowered and brought back to Hodges.

"Miller," Hodges addressed him sternly—he had a commanding way with him, I will admit —"Miller, there has been found in the top tray of your trunk eight thousand in currency, hidden in the folds of a shirt; also a skeleton key, a pair of woollen gloves that have been saturated with chloroform and a bottle which had contained chlofoform. Have you anything to say for yourself?"

"He's beat me again, even after he's dead!" Miller declared wildly. "That man robbed me of twenty thousand ten years ago, cheated me out of it, and ten days ago he robbed me of my wife! I followed them here. He taunted me, defied me! I killed him—held him and chloroformed him." He gripped his hands till the muscles bulged out under his coat sleeve. "Ugh, it was too easy a death for him, but I thought it would look like suicide. When I had him unconscious I called her and showed her what I had done. I showed her what had come of her foolishness. I wanted my revenge on her, too. She saw me throw him over the balcony. I grabbed her to keep her from yelling, and carried her to her room. I didn't think she would tell on me; I thought, after he was gone, she would come back to me. But he had such a hold on her that he has beaten me again, even after he is dead." The man closed his eyes and his head sank forward on his chest.

"Then you went down the fire-escape. Go on," Hodges urged relentlessly, placing a hand on his shoulder.

"Yes." Miller covered his face with his hands, and then flung them aside hastily. The odor of chloroform still clung to them I surmised, and it was that which he had been trying so earnestly to rub away with his handkerchief when I had first noticed him in the lobby.

"And turned off the switch so that the whole building was in darkness till you could put the money in your trunk. You waited till you saw the truck in the alley and the trunks being loaded before you performed the deed."

"*She* didn't *know* that!" Miller returned quickly.

"No; she didn't tell us anything," Hodges assured him. "Your capture is due entirely to the quick action and acuteness of the police department." He glanced at the clock on the wall above. "It is now only eleven-thirty, a short half-hour since the crime was committed," he announced complacently.

Shoes From Smokeless Powder

THE cow's hide and smokeless powder seem to be as far apart as the antipodes, but there is a close relation between them. The cow has a hide which is made into leather, but unfortunately each cow has but one such hide, and there's the rub. There have been developed so many different uses for that hide that it is impossible to make it go around.

For many articles, such as shoes, leather must be used, but for other articles, such as traveling bags or suitcases, it is not absolutely necessary that real leather be used, although it is perhaps from certain standpoints to have real leather bags. Then, to be sure, you pay for them. But for those things where leather is not essential the artificial product may be used to good advantage all around.

Automobile trimmings, traveling bags, pocketbooks, furniture, books, cheap shoes, boxes of all sorts, toys, dolls' shoes, the harness on stuffed animals and a host of other articles are made from artificial leather. It is met with in all the colors of the rainbow, but particularly in black. It is cheap, wears well and performs a definite service.

Just a word about the making of "leather" itself. There are two ways. One consists in grinding up old leather scrap, of which there is none too plentiful a supply, and mixing it with such substances as glue, gelatine, rubber, casein and other materials which hold the particles of leather dust together and permit the mixture to be made into the form of sheets. A fairly good wearing shoe can be made with soles and heels of this composition.

But there is not much of this sort of imitation leather used. Nearly all of the artificial leather is made by coating cloth with a specially prepared mixture. The cloth may be the standard blue cotton duck of closely woven fiber, but all sorts of textiles are used. The use of which the product is to be put will determine the nature of the cloth.

So much for the supporting background of the "leather." The principal product used in its manufacture and the one on which its good or bad properties depends is the coating. The coating is made of cotton, just as the cloth, but it is cotton in another form and possessing different properties. Essentially smokeless powder and the material from which artificial leather is made are similar.

The stuff used in artificial leather is nonexplosive. In order to use this material in the "leather" business it must be dissolved in certain solvents, as a mixture of denatured alcohol, benzol and acetone. There was a great excess lot of smokeless powder made in the war.

An industrial use for this material was found and now the otherwise useless smokeless powder can be used to make artificial leather.

In making the "leather" the smokeless powder is dissolved in the proper solvent, and there is added pigments to give the "leather" the desired color and castor oil to give it flexibility. The cloth is then coated with this mixture as many times as is necessary to give the required thickness of "leather," each coat being dried separately before the next is applied. Then to give the "leather" a high gloss the final coat is made with pure collodion.

The "leather" is embossed with the particular grain design of the animal whose hide it is desired to imitate. The simulation is so good that it is hard to tell the difference between the real and the artificial product by its appearance. When an extract of ground leather is used then the artificial product will smell just exactly like the real product.

HIDDEN HATE

by

Edgar Daniel Kramer

ALTHOUGH Brady had secured a conviction in the Maitland case, he was utterly broken by the sequence of events. There was no satisfaction in his victory—far from it. Like a nightmare this thing had been riding him through the weeks. He had not slept; he had not eaten; his nerves were at the breaking point, and his hair had grown perceptibly grayer. As district attorney the duty of prosecuting his best friend had developed upon him.

"Steve Maitland never did a low-down trick in his life," Brady groaned, as he slumped in his desk chair. "He's always played the game clean. Murder? Steve couldn't do it. What would be his motive?"

From the beginning, although the evidence against Maitland was conclusive, somewhere in the secret recesses of Brady's mind there lurked a doubt as to the condemned man's guilt. Even while presenting the seemingly irrefutable facts to the jury—facts that were as a stone wall to the efforts of the defendant's lawyers to break them down; facts that the world at large readily accepted at their face value—Brady was not convinced.

"I believe Steve innocent," he muttered gloomily, "and yet I've sent him to the chair."

Early one morning a servant entered the shadowy library of the Maitland apartment and threw open the blinds preparatory to cleaning. The girl screamed in terror and swooned. The other servants came rushing to her. In the flood of white sunlight now filling the room Steve Maitland, his hair tumbled and his evening clothes in disorder, lay sprawled amid the cushions of a divan snoring drunkenly. At his feet, her dress ripped into shreds and her loosened hair falling about her exposed shoulders like a cascade of brown waters, lay his wife, a broken lily white in death. Upon the marble pallor of her slender throat were the hideous blue imprints of long thin fingers.

At the trial it was brought out that the Maitlands had quarreled violently early the previous evening and that Maitland had flung out of the apartment in a blind rage. Thus the servants testified, each of them adding the explanation, however, that this was the first serious tiff they remembered their master and mistress to have had. With Carhart on the stand it was shown that Maitland had gone to his club and began drinking heavily. This had been the subject of general comment, because the accused had always been rather temperate

in his use of liquor. Carhart and Maitland had separated at ten o'clock at the curb, where the latter had ordered a taxi. Carhart had then gone back to the club and left some time later. The taxi driver stated that Maitland had directed him to run through the park until nearly midnight, at which time he took him to his apartment house and helped him to the entrance. However, most damning of all, the finger-prints upon the dead woman's throat were those of her husband. Had there existed any doubt as to the defendant's guilt these telltale finger-prints would have dissipated them. They changed circumstance to certainty, and, although vehemently protesting his innocence, Steve Maitland was sentenced to die.

"He is as incapable of such a crime as I am," Brady's doubt persisted, as he went over the case. "He just couldn't be such a brute, and we are murdering him."

The time for Maitland's execution came. He was to die at eight in the evening. Brady, for reasons all his own, had determined upon this.

"Why not in the morning?" Maitland had asked. "If it's got to be, the sooner the better. Get this thing over with."

"I'm sorry, Steve," Brady's voice broke in spite of himself. "I'd give my life rather than see you in a hole like this. I've been going through hell these past weeks. The evidence was all against you, and I had to do my duty. The time is set for eight o'clock, so that I can give you one last chance."

"Last chance!" Maitland laughed coldly.

"Steady, Steve!" And Brady left him.

At seven-forty-five Brady was nervously pacing up and down in the warden's office.

"It's one chance in a thousand," he was muttering. "I wonder if it will work."

Then Carhart entered softly.

"You sent for me, Brady?" he smiled.

"You've taken a lot of interest in this case," Brady answered, indicating a chair and seating himself at the desk. "Didn't miss a session, if I remember rightly. I thought you might want to be in at the finish, too. Smoke?" he asked abruptly, proffering a cigar.

"Maitland goes soon, eh?" Carhart asked as he struck a match.

"Getting him ready now," Brady sighed.

"Steve still persist in his innocence?" Carhart queried.

"Yes, but that's old stuff," Brady replied. "That's the gag they all try to put over. He couldn't work it against those finger-prints."

"Been pretty tough on you," Carhart droned.

Brady just grunted. He never did like Carhart, and here alone in this room together he was disliking him more and more as the seconds ticked away. During the trial he had sensed that Carhart was not telling all he knew. He did not trust the man. There was something reptilian about him; something sinister, suggestive of evil. He had brought him here in the hope of getting behind that glacial exterior, of catching the man off his guard.

Suddenly the lights grew dim and flickered, the carbons glowed momentarily, then blinked out. Carhart sprang to his feet with a nervous start."

"Take it easy, Carhart," Brady advised. "Steve's going now. They have thrown the current on."

Carhart settled in his chair, and the cigars glowed red in the gloom. To both men sitting there in silence it seemed as though an eternity had passed before the lights again flashed on.

"Steve's finished now!" Brady groaned. "The poor devil!"

"It's all over?" Carhart leaned forward.

Brady nodded.

"He's dead?" Carhart asked.

"Dead!" Brady gasped.

"Then you have murdered him, Brady," Carhart chuckled as he leaned across the desk. "You are Steve Maitland's murderer. His blood is on your hands."

"What do you mean?" Brady seemed to recoil from the vehemence of his accuser.

"Just this, Brady." Carhart was exultant. "I have been wanting to get you for a long time, ever since you put the lid on gambling here. You didn't know you were hitting me then, but you were. Money couldn't touch you. Anyway, your clean-up game cost me a mint of coin. I made up my mind to get you then and get you right. You could have gone high in politics, Brady, but now you're done." He paused. "The people had confidence in you, but after this you won't have confidence

in yourself. You won't have the nerve to prosecute another case; Maitland will haunt you. Politically you're a dead one now, Brady; deader than Jonah ever thought of being."

Carhart was fairly exuding satisfaction as he leaned over the cowering prosecutor. His voice was vibrant; his lean, sallow face was flushed; his eyes were flashing; his thin lips were smiling cruelly.

"And Maitland was innocent after all?" Brady asked drearily.

"As innocent as you are," Carhart laughed.

"As you?" Brady whispered.

"It is to laugh, Brady," Carhart taunted him. "As innocent as I am? Why, I hated Maitland because he married the woman I wanted, and I hated his wife because she threw me down for him."

"You hated both of them, eh?" Brady murmured.

"Like poison and you, too," Carhart went on. "Now I've got all three of you."

"You got us?"

"Sure!" Carhart was all assurance. "I've got the three of you. And it was pretty easy. Maitland and his wife are dead, and your career is a corpse, Brady. I don't mind explaining things to you," he boasted, "because you're not fool enough to show yourself up to the world after you have sent your friend to the electric chair. Your own future is at stake. You can't help Maitland now, and to save your own hide you will never squeal."

Brady was unable to speak, as he watched Carhart with worried eyes.

"You see," Carhart continued, "when I left Maitland as he climbed into the taxi, I went back to the club. I had heard him tell the driver to run him through the park. In his maudlin condition earlier in the evening he had told me about the quarrel with his wife. Something whispered me that here was the opportunity for which I had been waiting and preparing. Anyway, when Maitland staggered down the corridor to his apartment a bit after twelve, I was there to help him. Luck was with me, as he was still too intoxicated to know anything. I had stolen by the napping elevator man and up the stairs without being seen. I knocked softly upon the door, and his wife admitted us. In her rage and disgust at seeing him in such a condition she was more beautiful than ever. I dumped Maitland on a divan, where he huddled dead to the world."

Brady's breath was coming in little gasps, and he was tugging frantically at his collar. Carhart gloated over his discomfiture.

"I suggested that she call a servant, but she snapped that they were all out."

"You were alone together?" Brady asked.

"Then a thousand devils seemed to rise up in me." Carhart seemed not to have heard. "I seized her in my arms. She fought viciously and silently for a time. Feeling her strength going from her, she began to scream. I had gone too far to turn back, so there was nothing left for me to do but silence her."

"But the finger-prints?" Brady gasped, leaning toward the smiling Carhart with horror in his eyes. "They are infallible!"

"Infallible?" Carhart echoed. "That's another theory exploded, Brady. Infallibility is a myth."

With a magnificent gesture he drew a pair of gloves from his pocket and tossed them to Brady.

"These are rubber!" Brady exclaimed.

"And on the thumbs and fingers," Carhart explained, "you will find the impress of finger-prints."

"I see!" Brady nodded.

"They are Maitland's finger-prints," Carhart grinned; "prints which I had secured ahead of time—no matter how—and by means of heated electrotypes impressed into the rubber."

Brady was on his feet now, trembling violently.

"So with those gloves upon my hands," Carhart rejoiced, "I strangled Maitland's wife when she became too boisterous."

"You murdered her, Carhart?"

"Yes," he laughed cruelly, "you may call it that. To my way of thinking, I have just settled some old scores with her, with Maitland and with you, Mr. Public Prosecutor, murderer of innocent men. Thanks awfully for letting me in at the finish. It has been most enjoyable, I assure you. I bid you good-evening."

Carhart moved to the door. Then Brady's manner suddenly changed. He became all energy as he pressed a buzzer. When Carhart

opened the door a burly plain-clothes man blocked his passing.

"Officer, arrest that man!" Brady ordered brusquely.

"You wouldn't dare, Brady," Carhart sneered.

"And why not?" Brady asked easily.

"You have too much at stake."

"Not so fast, Carhart!" Brady seemed another man. He was smiling; the worried look had gone from his eyes; his voice rang like a bell. "Not so fast! Not so fast! You are a very clever rascal, Carhart, but you have overplayed your hand this time. I have dictagraph records of all we have been saying since the moment you arrived in this room. I played you right, Carhart. I thought you were the kind that likes to brag when his dirty schemes have gone to his liking. I doped you right, and you have talked yourself to the chair. So help me, Carhart, I have got the goods on you!"

"You don't have the nerve to show yourself up," Carhart snarled.

"We'll see," Brady answered.

"And that won't change the fact that you have croaked Maitland!"

"Wrong again, Carhart!" Brady laughed. "Wrong again! We were only testing the apparatus for your especial benefit when the lights went out. A bit dramatic, I'll admit, Carhart, but the important thing is that it worked. It was a fake, and you swallowed the bait—hook, line and sinker. That's the trouble with you clever chaps; you think you have a monopoly on the gray matter. Don't lose any sleep over Steve Maitland, Carhart. He is alive in spite of your devilish ingenuity."

And Carhart, sudden fear eating at the heart of him, trembling like a stricken thing, his breath coming in choking gasps, was too utterly surprised at the turn matters had taken to resist when the clinking handcuffs were snapped upon his wrists.

UNEARTH THE TOMB OF AN AZTEC WARRIOR

TWO burial chambers in the prehistoric community dwelling near Aztec, N. M., are reported by Earl H. Morris, in a letter given out recently at the Museum of Natural History, as the most interesting of numerous recent discoveries by museum workers engaged in the Archer M. Huntington archeological survey of the Southwest. Mr. Morris has charge of the excavations.

"Beneath the débris adjacent to the famous Painted Room opened in 1920," he writes, "there has been found a second chamber, perfectly preserved in every detail. The pine and cedar beams in the smoke-browned ceiling are as sound as when the trees were felled, and on the wall-stones the marks of the quartzite pebbles with which they were faced are as bright and fresh as if the artisan who shaped the blocks, though dead these thousand years, had but yesterday gathered up his primitive tools and stepped out of the finished chamber.

"This room was the tomb of a warrior, who lay in solitary state against one wall immediately back of the recessed altar in the Painted Room. The body was that of a veritable giant over 6 feet 1 inch in height, who thus towered head and shoulders above the average men of his tribe of the village when he was in the prime of life.

"The mighty frame had been buried in a mantle of feather cloth and enshrouded with a mat of woven rush stems. Back of the body there were four magnificent pottery bowls, a cup and a basket. Upon the skull rested a large spherical vase with a neatly fitting cover, both of them exquisitely wrought and ornamented.

"A circular shield, three feet in diameter, unlike anything previously found in Pueblo ruins, covered the warrior from thighs to temples. It is an example of coiled basketry technique, but unusually thick and strong. The outer surface had been coated with gum and thickly spangled with flakes of mica. When held in the sunlight, due to the numberless reflecting surfaces, the great disk would have shone with dazzling brilliance, perhaps sufficently intense to have confused the vision of the archer who sought to drive his arrow through the shield to the living flesh behind it."

A Detective's Story

"ABOUT the narrowest squeeze I ever had in the course of my profession happened to me while tracing down a gang of counterfeiters in Chicago, two or three years ago," commenced a noted Eastern detective, who was in Omaha on a visit, in answer to a writer's request for a "yarn."

"This is what saved my life and reputation as well as aiding in capturing my men," he continued, handing the writer a peculiar looking contrivance resembling a cigar case in many respects. "This is a pocket telegraph sounder, and is used quite extensively by members of the service in warning each other in case of danger, or when necessary to impart information. See," pressing the sides and producing a clicking sound, "it sounds like a telegraph instrument in a distant room. I took a thorough course in telegraphy when I was young, and have found it of great benefit to me in my profession. With this thing two of us who understand the system can carry on a conversation and never appear to know each other. Getting impatient, are you? Well, as my yarn hangs on my 'secret ticker,' I thought it best to describe its use before telling the story.

"It was during just such weather as this," continued the detective, "when I was summoned from an important case in some Southern town to undertake the highly lucrative (if successful) case of ferreting out this band of criminals. They had given the local authorities no little trouble, and the case was getting 'cold' when I took a hand. It is useless to worry you with a tale of vexatious disappointments in getting their trail; sufficient to say that at last I struck one that led into interesting quarters, and among a set of criminals who were hard to handle. To get conclusive evidence it was necessary for me to visit a certain dive in an unsavory quarter, and resort to some detective tactics not necessary to mention now. I was disguised as a sport, and I tell you it made me feel chilly when I thought of the possibility of being discovered in my character, as I descended into the room where the leaders of the counterfeiters' band were wont to congregate, for some of them knew me by name. I had carelessly made no provision for police within call, not thinking I would corner my men that night. I was soon mixed up in some game, playing with a crowd of men, none of whom would scruple at taking human life, and among whom a betrayal of my identity meant almost certain death. In entering the room I had noticed something familiar in the appearance of one of the waiters, but did not give it much thought at the time.

"Plenty of whisky had been flowing, and the men were getting hilarious. Seeing their condition, I thought it best to depart, and had made some steps toward doing so when a hand was laid on my shoulder and a voice, perfectly steady, said: 'Hold on, cully, don't be so fast; I know you. Please sit down.' Turning, I perceived a member of the company until now slightly noticed by me, but who, on closer inspection, proved to be a noted and desperate criminal. I sat down more from weakness than in compliance with his sarcastic request. He arose and told the others who I was and what I wanted, and wound up by requesting a suggestion as to how I should be disposed of.

"I sat thinking deeply when suddenly a clicking sound startled me. I almost jumped from the chair with joy. One of my men was in the room in some disguise and had recognized me, and was now letting me know of his presence. We kept conversing until I learned that he was the waiter whom I first failed to recognize. A plan was formed on the spot that he should slip out and raid the concern with the police. Well, in an hour the entire gang was under lock and key, and we had earned the heavy reward offered by the authorities. You can depend upon it that ever since that episode I have congratulated myself that I understood telegraphy."

A JOURNEY OF DUPLICITY

by

S. F. Mansergh

CHAPTER ONE

MANDEN STEEL, the detective, sat fingering the letter in front of him, his brows puckered.

"Molly!" The girl at the other desk looked up inquiringly. "Who is Philip R. Dennis?"

The girl thought a moment, then reached for a volume of "Who's Who." Turning the pages rapidly, she came to a stop and handed the book over to Steel.

"I'll see what we've got in the morgue," she said and left the room. Manden Steel studied the scant paragraph: "Dennis, Philip Rushton, Banker, b. Mar. 18, 1858, eld. s."—etc., etc.—"member J. B. Morton & Co." As he looked up his assistant returned, bringing with her a large brown envelope containing newspaper clippings.

"Not much here, either," she remarked, placing them before him. He ran through the clippings quickly.

"No photograph?" he asked his assistant, frowning.

"No," answered Molly, "it's an eccentricity of his. Never allows himself to be photographed."

A buzzer sounded.

"There he is now," said Manden Steel, glancing at his watch. Molly Kane replaced the "Who's Who," and presently ushered in the visitor, a stern-faced man of about sixty, keen-eyed and forceful. The stranger stood in silence as Molly left the room. At the click of the door he turned to Steel, who had risen and was surveying him.

"If you got my letter, this will identify me," he said, handing Steel a card with the name, "Philip R. Dennis," written across it. The detective nodded.

"You are Mr. Dennis?" he inquired.

"I am Mr. Dennis's confidential adviser," said the older man, taking the seat Steel had indicated. Manden Steel looked steadily at him a moment and then said quietly: "Very well, let's get down to business, Mr.——"

"Rush," supplied his visitor. He paused and then went on: "This may seem at first unusual to you, a detective. There is no crime to be detected, but one to be prevented. A situation has arisen, calling for a man of resource, courage and initiative. You have been mentioned to us—to Mr. Dennis, that is—as being such a man."

Manden Steel nodded coolly. "I probably am," he said.

The other man looked at him, surprised for a moment into admiration; then, recovering

himself, he said grimly: "That remains to be seen. At any rate, sir, the situation is this: an envelope must be delivered in San Francisco ten days from now. The contents of this envelope are of the most vital importance, not only to Mr. Dennis, but to you and me; to the Government of the United States. Certain persons will try to intercept the delivery of this envelope. If they succeed the consequences will be grave—international."

He paused impressively and, lighting a cigar, went on. "The reward for this service will be large, Mr. Steel. You may name your own price."

Manden Steel looked his guest squarely in the eye. "Part of my price," he said, "is absolute frankness, Mr. Dennis."

"Mr. Rush!" said the other sharply.

Steel raised his hand imperatively. "Let's drop this childish disguise," he said. "You tell me your business requires a man of resource, courage and initiative. It can be entrusted to no less a man. If your Mr. Rush is dependable enough to send to me he is dependable enough to carry the envelope to San Francisco. Furthermore, your hat contains the initials, P. R. D.; your cigar clipper has the letter D engraved upon it, and your matches come from the Unity Club, of which Mr. Dennis is a member. You are carrying your hobby for incognito too far."

Dennis gazed at the detective silently for a space and then said tersely: "Mr. Steel, you're the man for this job."

"Perhaps," said Manden Steel, "but I can't go into it blindfolded."

Dennis thought a moment, as though making up his mind, and then said: "Certain mines have lately been discovered in Siberia. These mines produce a material absolutely essential to modern warfare. The firm of J. B. Morton & Co. is determined to get this concession, so that the control may rest in the hands of Americans. I need not tell Manden Steel that a certain Asiatic nation is interested in keeping the concession away from America, or rather, I should say Americans, for Washington cannot officially recognize the transaction."

Manden Steel nodded. "I can expect no help, then, from that quarter," he said.

Dennis resumed: "No. And you may be sure that the other side will stop at nothing. They will undoubtedly employ the most desperate criminals they can lay their hands on. It was this that prompted us to come to a man like yourself, who has spent his life in fighting crime."

By this time Steel's mind had grasped the magnitude of the task before him. Glorying in the prospective combat, he rapped out: "I'm ready to start! When can I have the letter?"

Without a word Dennis calmly ripped out the lining of the telltale hat and passed a plain white envelope to the detective. Dennis explained: "Since the San Francisco conference was broached I have been constantly shadowed—probably followed here to-day. The Asiatic mind overlooks nothing. They are subtle, but they would never dream I would bring the letter to you on my first visit. It was too obvious."

Manden Steel nodded thoughtfully and escorted his visitor to the door. When he was gone Steel stood by his desk musing. "Asiatic mind—too obvious—h'm!" He rang for Molly Kane. "I've got fifteen minutes to catch the Twentieth Century. Get out my emergency bag." While the girl brought the traveling bag which he kept in his office for such hurry calls, Steel seated himself at his desk and hastily scrawled a few lines, which he handed to Molly with brief instructions. Bag in hand he paused at the door. "Call the station and reserve me a seat. There'll be no difficulty; travel is light just now. If anything comes up while I'm gone communicate with me in the usual way. Good-by."

CHAPTER TWO

As the famous twenty-hour limited pressed along the east bank of the Hudson Manden Steel settled back in his chair. From the little pile of magazines in his lap he selected one and began to read, as though to while away the tedium of the journey. What the story was Manden Steel never knew, for the time was more profitably spent in studying his fellow-passengers. They seemed the usual types to be found in a Pullman car. Satisfied with his observation, Steel got up and went

back to the smoking compartment, taking a magazine with him. He finished a cigar, listening idly to a rather heated discussion of prohibition, and then wandered back to his seat. A low whistle of astonishment escaped him. The first shot had been fired. Manden Steel's bag was gone. In an instant his quick brain had decided on a course of action. He would play the innocent traveler. He shouted loudly for the porter, and the grinning Ethiopian approached expectantly. In a flash the grin vanished as he caught sight of Steel's indignant face.

"My bag!" spluttered Steel.

"Yassah!" obliged the darky. "Ah put yo' bag right—— Lordy! It's gone!"

"Of course it's gone! Where is it?" asked Dick Mondane, as Manden Steel preferred to call himself now. Before the frightened African could answer a girl sitting in the seat across the aisle volunteered: "I saw a man take it and go into the car ahead. I thought it was you," indicating Steel. The detective looked sharply at her and, without a word, pushed forward, followed by the porter and several of the more curious passengers.

Their search took them only as far as the wash-room of the next car, where the bag was discovered, its contents strewn about and the leather lining ripped out. Steel ran his eye quickly over the débris.

"Anythin' missin', sah?" queried the porter, proceeding to repack the satchel.

"No," said Steel briefly, as he strode back to his seat, his brain racing madly. His opponents were on the train; the bold robbery of his bag proved that. This was not the work of an ordinary bag-snatcher, else why the ripped-out lining. No. Some one was playing for higher stakes than the contents of a mere traveling bag. He could not but admire their audacity and speed; they must have shadowed Dennis to Steel's office and then followed the detective on the train.

His cogitations grew clouded as he became acutely conscious of a steady gaze directed upon him. He raised his eyes quickly, barely in time to catch the instantly averted ones of the girl opposite him. He leaned towards her.

"I'm sorry," he said; "in my excitement I forgot to thank you."

"Not at all," she answered brightly; "I really thought the man was you. He was tall and"—she hesitated coquettishly—"good-looking."

Manden Steel bowed gallantly. "Thank you," he returned. "I can't imagine what they were after."

"They?" she questioned.

Steel mentally scored a point for her acumen. Coupling this with the fact that she had volunteered the information of her inability to identify the crook, Steel decided that she would bear watching.

"Was anything taken?" she ventured.

"No," Steel responded smilingly, "what was there to take? I'm an actor, out of work. May I introduce myself?"

He fished out a card bearing the name Richard Mondane. She glanced at it and said: "My name is Grace Winslow. I am on my way to visit some relatives in Oakland, California."

During this conversation Steel's camera-like brain had been recording Grace Winslow. She was hardly beautiful, yet decidedly attractive, probably twenty-five or -six. There was nothing about her to excite suspicion, and yet —yet—— Steel groped for the solution. He found it in a barely perceptible contraction of her eyelids, a momentary tightening of the lips that belied her apparent winsomeness; a mere wisp of a clue floating in the mid-air of consciousness, but to Manden Steel it was a straw showing which way the wind blew.

"I'm going to the Coast myself. Los Angeles," he said. "I expect to get into the movies."

Grace Winslow permitted herself a look of pleasure. Steel broke in: "It's too bad, though. I've got to leave you in Chicago. It was a hurry call, and I couldn't get reservations beyond there, so I shall stay over a day."

"What a coincidence!" she cooed; "I'm staying over there, too. I promised to look up an old schoolmate of mine."

Perhaps more than a coincidence, thought Manden Steel. Grace Winslow went on: "Who knows? Perhaps we shall see more of each other."

We shall, thought Steel grimly. He had definitely placed Grace Winslow.

CHAPTER THREE

IN Chicago they taxied to the same hotel. Grace Winslow had admitted an ignorance of traveling, and had gladly—a trifle too gladly—accepted Steel's mentorship. A discreetly smiling hotel clerk, scenting romance, had assigned them to adjoining rooms.

After removing the grime of travel Steel decided to carry the war into Italy. He picked up the telephone receiver and asked to be connected with Miss Winslow. The line was busy. Steel moved swiftly. "Give me Mr. Riley, the house detective!" he snapped. A few minutes later a sharp knock sounded on his door. He opened it cautiously, his finger to his lips. The burly house detective flashed him a look of surprised recognition, but before he could speak Steel whispered: "Don't talk; there may be an ear at that connecting door." It took but a short time for Steel to outline his plan to his old friend, Riley.

Steel walked to Grace Winslow's door and rapped boldly.

"I tried to get you on the phone a while ago," he explained when she appeared.

"Oh, yes. I was trying to locate my friend," she countered. "But I find she's out of town."

"Then perhaps you will oblige a lonely traveler by having dinner with him."

"I'll be glad to," she assented eagerly, "but you must give me fifteen minutes. I'm really a sight."

"Fine! I'll meet you downstairs in fifteen minutes." The detective hurried back to his own room.

"Quick, Riley!" he jerked out; "get your operator and fix it to listen in if 703 uses her phone."

Riley muttered a few short commands into the instrument, and sat there, the receiver at his ear and his muscular paw covering the transmitter. Suddenly he motioned to Steel.

"There they go!" he whispered hoarsely.

As Steel listened a grim smile lurked about the corners of his mouth. Carefully replacing the receiver, he arose. "The Asiatic mind seems to be losing its subtlety," he murmured, to no one in particular.

At the appointed time he met Grace Winslow. Her eyes narrowed as she noticed the magazine under his arm. She smiled at him. "That must be a thrilling story you're reading."

He nodded. "I am in the midst of an interesting adventure. I must keep on to the end," he said pointedly.

"Then perhaps I have interrupted," with an air of pique.

"A pleasant interruption," rejoined the detective, picking up the menu card.

As the roast was served a page-boy passed through the restaurant, crying: "Call for Mr. Mondane!" Steel hurriedly excused himself and followed the boy, the magazine still tucked under his arm.

In a few moments he returned. "Will you excuse me? It seems my room has been broken into and I'm wanted upstairs."

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "You must go, but do hurry back. Won't you let me read your magaine while you're gone?"

The detective hesitated an instant, then: "Certainly. You don't mind if I tear off the back cover? I have filled it with figuring."

Without waiting for her consent, he ripped off the cover, but Grace Winslow's keen eye had noted that one or two extra pages were included in the tearing. Manden Steel had won that move, but his opponent had learned that the back pages of a magazine were strangely valuable to him. With a charmingly impulsive gesture she left her chair and moved towards Steel.

"Oh, do let me go up with you. I've never seen a really truly burglar!"

He admired her nerve. There was nothing to do but consent as graciously as he might.

When they reached the room they found two handcuffed men glowering at the smiling Riley, who toyed with a big automatic. The genial house detective played his part admirably.

"You Mister Mondane?" Steel nodded.

Riley continued: "I just caught these two birds tryin' to turn you off. They registered right after you did, and they was so particular about the location of their room that I thought I'd watch 'em. I wasn't wrong, either. A few minutes ago they come sneakin' down the fire-escape and into your room. So I just follows 'em, pushes my gat in their faces, and here we are." Steel looked about the room, and Riley spoke up: "Guess

there's nothin' missin'. They didn't have time."

"Well, what'll we do about this?" asked the apparently perplexed Mondane. "I can't stay over to press a charge; I'm leaving to-morrow."

"That'll be all right," returned Riley; "we'll see that these boys are looked after."

He hustled the two men out of the room with scant ceremony, leaving Manden Steel alone with Grace Winslow.

Steel's secret elation ran high. He had uncovered three of his opponents and disposed of two. The third he would keep under surveillance, knowing that through this channel he was bound to reach the remainder of this desperate band.

The day was to Manden Steel. He could well afford to bow politely to Miss Winslow and say: "Let us return to our interrupted dinner."

CHAPTER FOUR

THE journey from Chicago to Omaha was uneventful. To Manden Steel it was, however, only the lull in the storm. There still lay half a continent between him and his goal, and if Dennis was to be believed, his enemies would not strew his path with roses. Quite the contrary, he must expect them to redouble their efforts to thwart him.

Most of the time he spent in his stateroom soothing his brain with the meditations of Marcus Aurelius, or glancing idly through the window at the flat panorama of the nation's granary. In the next compartment Grace Winslow was similarly occupied. They took their meals together. He found her a charming travelng companion, her sparkling repartee enlivening the monotony of the Overland Trail. As the time spent over the coffee cups became longer, Steel grew vaguely uneasy. He sought, as always, the reason, and while several suggested themselves none could be definitely accepted until he had subjected it to the test of fact. Before lunch he set about applying this test. When he had finished he joined Grace Winslow in the diner.

She was unusually brilliant this day, and a full hour had passed before they bestirred themselves from the table.

Back in his stateroom Manden Steel permitted himself the luxury of a quiet chuckle. It was as he suspected. Grace Winslow had at least one confederate on the train, whose work was thorough and systematic.

He examined his satchel. Knotted across the lock in such a manner that to open the bag would break it was a human hair, exactly as he had left it. He plucked a hair from his own head and held it beside the one on the satchel. The difference was perceptible, and it was this that caused him to chuckle. Manden Steel had left a strand of his own brown hair, and the one now sealing his bag was black.

As he straightened up from his examination of the hairs a sharp knock sounded at the door and Grace Winslow stepped in. He had barely uttered a greeting when he found himself looking into the muzzle of a small but serviceable revolver.

"Throw up your hands!" she rasped. "And keep them there!"

Gone was the charming manner, the seductive helplessness, and in their place Manden Steel saw cold, tense determination.

"The game is up, Mister Manden Steel. I want that letter."

Steel smiled imperturbably. "You've searched my room——"

Without denying the accusation, she interrupted. "And now we're going to search you!"

Keeping the weapon leveled at him, she kicked the door softly with her heel. In answer to the signal a short dark man entered the room. Grace Winslow spoke.

"Remove the gentleman's gat, Jerry, and then we'll get down to business."

Jerry worked quickly, and in a moment the detective was disarmed. The woman continued:

"Now if you'll hand me over the back cover that you tore off a magazine in Chicago you'll save yourself the trouble of a frisk."

Manden Steel looked at her calmly. "I haven't the slightest idea of what you are talking."

Her voice grew impatient. "Take it from him, Jerry!"

Steel's tone showed defeat as he said resignedly: "I guess you've got me." He drew from his inside pocket the folded magazine cover and tossed it on the seat. She pounced on it eagerly and, ripping apart the glued-together pages, extracted an envelope, which she hurriedly thrust in her bosom.

Grace Winslow looked up triumphantly. "In a few minutes we'll be in Cheyenne. You will take your baggage and walk through the train, followed by Jerry and me. At Cheyenne you will leave the train from the last car, and you will stand on the platform until we pull out."

Steel smiled. "Suppose I won't do all this?" he said.

"You will," she answered grimly. "Jerry will keep his hand in his coat pocket, and he is a dead shot from the hip. We will stand on the observation platform chatting with you till the train leaves."

As Steel stood dejectedly waiting for the limited to pull out, Grace Winslow leaned over and whispered: "You can do what you like after the train is gone. Wire—have us arrested—anything. It won't do any good. Your precious letter will be where none of your friends can reach it."

The woman laughed exultingly as the locomotive whistle gave its warning.

Manden Steel watched the train begin its long climb over the Rockies, his eye following the diminishing picture of Grace Winslow waving a white handkerchief from the observation platform.

After pondering a moment he walked thoughtfully into the station and bought a ticket to New York.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE low-hanging afternoon sun sent its last oblique rays over the roofs of San Francisco. Like a painter putting in the finishing touches on a masterpiece he splashed with color the western walls of the city of the Golden Gates. One slender ray stole through a window on the eighth floor of a famous hotel and illuminated the features of Mr. Crowley. This added little to that gentleman's radiance, as he was already suffused by an inward glow of satisfaction. Mr. Crowley felt the complacence of one whose work is well done and who now awaits his reward. He was happily contemplating the pleasures to be extracted from that reward.

Suddenly his dream was rudely shattered. Grace Winslow burst into the room and spluttered:

"Jerry! We've been double-crossed again by that dime-novel detective!"

The sunlight vanished from Jerry's face as he jumped to his feet, and a dark cloud of suspicion gathered in its place.

"What do you mean?" he growled dubiously.

She continued more calmly: "I went up to the boss all set to bring home the dough. He turned on me like a wildcat and handed me the bawling out of my life."

"What for?" asked Jerry, still incredulously. "Didn't we get the letter for him?"

"We got a letter all right," sneered the woman, "but it wasn't *the* letter." Her voice grew shrill with fury. "It was a phony! That guy Steel handed us a nice razz in Cheyenne."

"Where's the real letter, then?" snarled Jerry.

"Steel's got it, I suppose, and you can bet your life he's here in Frisco now giving us the laugh."

"Didn't Johnson wire us that Steel bought a ticket for New York?"

She broke in impatiently: "Yes, but did he see him go?"

"No," admitted the crestfallen Jerry; "Johnson says he lost track of him."

"That's the trouble with that dub," she snapped. "Now we don't know where Steel is. But it's up to us to find him if we want to be around when they're handin' out the pay checks."

Their determination boded no good for Manden Steel.

CHAPTER SIX

THREE days later a tall, lithe figure strode briskly up one of the fashionable residential streets of San Francisco. It was the appointed time for the delivery of the message that Manden Steel had undertaken to carry

across the continent. Arriving at a pretentious mansion, the striding figure rang the bell, and a moment later Manden Steel was ushered into the house where he had agreed to meet Philip R. Dennis."

He showed no surprise when the door was opened by an Oriental, as he knew the Californian custom of employing them as servants. In the library, however, his face denoted mild wonder as a smiling Japanese stepped forward and asked for the letter.

"But," remonstrated the detective, "my orders were to give it to Mr. Dennis personally."

"That is so, Mr. Steele, but you are late; my master is already at the conference. You are to give the letter to me. See—here are his orders."

Steel took the proffered note and, after a close scrutiny, threw it upon the table. Apparently satisfied, he drew from his pocket a white envelope and gave it to the aged Jap.

"I'm sorry I'm late," he said, slowly, "you can hurry over with this to—your master."

The little man paused in the doorway. "Please make yourself comfortable, Mr. Steel, until I return."

As the front door slammed, Steel walked over to the window to watch the departing Nipponese. A sharp cry escaped him. Propped behind the heavy curtains was the bound and gagged figure of a man. It was the work of an instant for the detective to liberate the prisoner. The man reeled weakly, but Steel quickly revived him with a draught from his pocket-flask. He looked about him wildly for a moment and then gasped:

"The letter!"

"It's all right," the detective reassured him, "I gave it to Mr. Dennis's secretary."

The man turned a look of horror on him. "I'm the only secretary Mr. Dennis has!" he expostulated.

"But he gave me a note from Mr. Dennis," exhibiting the paper.

The man examined it. "Yes,'" he said, "they took it away from me when they jumped on me."

Steel appeared nonplussed as he stood there in silence. The man burst out:

"What's the matter with you? You don't seem to realize what you've done—giving that letter away!"

Steel smiled cryptically. "I haven't given it away—yet," he said quietly.

The man's eyes lit up. "Then you have it still?" His voice shook with suppressed eagerness. "Give it to me!"

"How do I know you're the right man?" Steel parried.

"By Mr. Dennis's note."

"The Jap had that, too. Haven't you anything you can identify yourself by?"

The man reached into his breast pocket. "Yes," he said, "by this!" leveling a pistol at Steel's head.

He whistled and the door was thrown open admitting Jerry Crowley. In a trice the detective was securely bound.

"This time," said Jerry grimly, "you're goin' to get a real frisk."

And a real frisk it was. Steel's pockets *were completely emptied and the contents* piled on the table. Then Jerry went over the detective's clothing inch by inch. A grunt of satisfaction escaped him as he felt an unusual thickness in Steel's vest. Whipping out his pocket-knife he slashed the unoffending garment and fished out through the rent a crinkled white envelope.

The sun once more shone on Mr. Crowley's face; he bent an amiable eye upon the detective.

"Nice little detective!" he said, playfully pinching Steel's cheek. "So you gave us the letter after all. Now we're goin' to do something for you." He paused meditatively. "We're goin' to take you upstairs to see an old friend of yours."

Without further ado they hustled Steel up the stairs to a room on the next floor. Against the wall the detective saw Philip R. Dennis securely lashed to a chair. In a moment he was himself similarly bound. In the doorway the urbane Crowley paused and bade the two prisoners a taunting farewell.

The echoing footsteps died away and a muffled slam of the front door assured them of the departure of the crooks. The old millionaire spoke quietly:

"You did your best, Mr. Steel. It was my duty to see that this end was protected."

"It was no surprise to me," responded the

detective. "My opponents got the better of me in Cheyenne—at least I let them believe so. They put me off the train and, knowing I was watched, I bought transportation for New York. I eluded my shadowers and, through the assistance of a friend in the Aviation Corps, I beat the Limited into Ogden." Steel smiled reminiscently. "I owe you my thanks, Mr. Dennis, for that glorious flight over the Rockies. The result was that when my enemies landed in Frisco I was at their heels. I knew that when they discovered I had given them a dummy letter in Cheyenne they would make a last desperate effort, so I made my plans accordingly."

"You did more than was expected of you, Mr. Steel, and it is a pity your plans miscarried." Dennis suppressed a groan. "God knows how long we shall have to stay here. The servants are all locked up in the cellar."

Steel reassured him with "My men will be here any minute. By this time they have undoubtedly arrested the whole gang."

Dennis rejoined morosely, "I'm afraid your men will never recover that letter."

"I'm afraid not," Steel agreed quietly, "because they——"

The words never passed his lips, for the sound of footsteps on the stairs brought them both to the alert. The detective shouted:

"In here, boys!"

In a short time friendly hands had released the two captives and Steel learned that the entire gang had been rounded up.

"But the letter——" interjected Dennis anxiously.

"Oh—the letter," Steel answered. "Mr. Dennis, do you remember the circumstances in which you brought it to me in New York? You did the obvious thing and it defeated the subtle Asiatic mind."

"Well?" said Dennis, puzzled.

"What is the most obvious way of getting a letter from New York to San Francisco?" Dennis looked blankly at him.

"Why," continued Manden Steel, "by putting a two-cent stamp on it and dropping it into a mailbox."

"What!" exclaimed the astonished millionaire. "You mailed it?"

"Exactly," replied the detective, "or rather my assistant, Miss Kane, did five days ago. It arrived this morning, and it is now in my mailbox at the hotel awaiting you."

A CURIOUS ANIMAL

NONE of the curious animals that nature has fashioned is more specterlike than the Madagascan animal called the aye-aye. Its grotesque features suggest vividly the weird creations of a nightmare. It is about three feet in length, with long, coarse fur of a dark brown or black color. The tail is long and bushy, and the ears are remarkable for their size. The hands and feet are unlike those of any other creature, for the fingers and toes, with the exception of the great toes, are exceedingly long and slender and furnished with attenuated claws. Those, combined with the peculiar staring eyes, give the creature a gruesome appearance.

These slender fingers play a curious part in the feeding habits of the aye-aye. By their aid the animal can dislodge from their hiding places the grubs and insects that form a part of its diet. When it gets an orange the aye-aye will first bite a circular hole in the fruit and then hold it against the side of its open mouth, while with the long fingers of its disengaged hand it will scoop out the entire contents of the orange until only the skin is left.

The aye-aye is related to the lemurs, although when it was discovered its chisel-like teeth led the naturalists to believe that it was a rodent.

The natives of Madagascar greatly dread the aye-aye and have a superstitious fear that if they should touch one they will die within a year. When it is accidentally caught in a trap set for some other creature the owner of the trap liberates the animal after he has smeared fat over its body as a peace offering.

One Cent a Month

ABOUT a year ago a bright looking young young man entered our counting-room in response to an advertisement for an assistant shipping-clerk. He told the usual tale of how he desired a position more than wages for the time being, and was willing to accept a nominal salary to start in on. The proprietor was feeling in particularly good humor that afternoon, and said pleasantly:

"Well, sir, what would you consider a nominal salary? What would you be willing to accept in beginning?"

"I want to show you, sir, that I mean business, and I will work for one cent the remainder of this month providing you think it would not be too much to double my salary each month thereafter."

"That's a novel proposition, surely," said the proprietor, with a smile. "Do you know what you're talking about, my dear boy?"

"Well, sir, my principal aim is to learn the business," responded the young fellow, "and I would be almost willing to work for nothing, but I'd like to feel and be able to say that I was earning something, you know."

"I'll take you," remarked the proprietor, decisively. "One cent, two cents, four cents, eight cents, sixteen," he enumerated. "You won't get much for a while," he added.

He took him up to the cashier. "This is John Smith," he said. "He will go to work as assistant shipping-clerk to-morrow. His salary will be one cent this month. Double it every month from now on."

"In consideration of my working for this small salary I might ask you to assure me a position for a definite period?" inquired John Smith.

"We don't usually do that," replied the proprietor, "but we can't lose much on you, anyhow, I guess, and you look like an honest fellow. How long do you want employment?"

"Three years, sir, if agreeable to you."

The proprietor agreed, and young Mr. Smith, on pretense of wanting some evidence of the stability of his place, got him to write out and sign a paper that he had been guaranteed a position in the house for three years on the terms stated.

He worked along for six months without drawing a cent. He said he would draw all his earnings at Christmas. The cashier one day thought he'd figure up how much would be coming to the young man. He grew so interested in the project that he kept multiplying for the three years. The result almost staggered him. This is the column of figures he took to the proprietor:

First month, .01; second, .02; third, .04; fourth, .08; fifth, .16; sixth, .32; seventh, .64; eighth, $1.28; ninth, $2.56; tenth, $5.12; eleventh, $10.24; twelfth, $20.48; thirteenth, $40.96; fourteenth, $81,92; fifteenth, $163.84; sixteenth, $327.68; seventeenth, $655.36; eighteenth, $1,311.72; nineteenth, $2,623.54; twentieth, $5,247.08; twenty-first, $10,494.16, twenty-second, $20,988.32; twenty-third, $41,976.64; twenty-fourth, $82,953.28; twenty-fifth, $165,906.56; twenty-sixth, $331,813.12; twenty-seventh, $663,626.24; twenty-eighth, $1,327,252.48; twenty-ninth, $2,654,504.96; thirtieth, $4,309,009.92; thirty-first, $8,618,019.84; thirty-second, $17,236,039.68; thirty-third, $34,472,078.36; thirty-fourth, $68,944,156.72; thirty-fifth, $137,888,313.44; thirty-sixth, 275,776,626.88; total salary for three years, $552,554,253.65.

The proprietor nearly fainted when he understood how, even if he were twice as rich as Vanderbilt, he would be ruined in paying John Smth's salary. He concluded to discharge the modest young man at once. Smith had figured up how much would be due him and reminded the proprietor of his written agreement. Rather than take chances in the courts and let everybody know how he had been duped, he paid Smith $5,000 and bade him good-by.

The Mystery of Man and How to Solve It

By RUSSELL RAYMOND VOORHEES

PART IV—PHYSIOGNOMY

PHYSIOGNOMY is the delineation of character from the features of the face, such as the chin, nose, eyes, cheeks, mouth and so on, and is therefore quite different from the sciences previously considered. Almost everybody believes in Physiognomy to some extent. For instance, the eyes are almost always felt to show something about a person's character. A high forehead is felt to show a large and active brain. And even a dimple in the chin or cheeks is felt to mean something by many people. But, as a rule, while everybody believes in Physiognomy to some extent, they do not know it by its real name. They are simply unconscious students of faces. But there is much more to Physiognomy than the bit that the average person knows and it will pay any one to give some time to the study of this science.

Like most of the other sciences of our day we can trace the origin of Physiognomy back to the ancients, the Greeks and Romans who have given so much to present day civilization. Such men as Plato, Socrates and Aristotle, whose achievements are more or less well known, were believers in and writers on Physiognomy in the dark, dim ages past. They practised the science, and while many of their deductions have been changed it is only fitting that we should give to them the credit that certainly belongs to them. And incidentally it would seem that a science that has endured so long through the ages certainly must contain something of value.

It is not difficult to prove that Physiognomy is true in a general way. For instance, a person who has a happy, pleasant disposition is generally of a smiling nature, and certainly this shows in the face in a no uncertain way. When we meet such persons we know at once that they are happy and pleasant to talk to and be with. And the reverse is equally true. A sour disposition is easily distinguished on the face and we avoid such a person. That is simply physical reaction. And if we were to go into physiology we might be able with very little effort to prove there is a real sound reason why the other features of the face respond to the mental and spiritual growth of the person. But I will pass this up because I believe the reader is more interested in knowing what a thing means than he is in knowing why it means thus and so.

The first feature of the face that we will take up is the forehead. Generally speaking, foreheads are of two types, the high and the low. A high forehead means a brainy person, one who is interested in thought and study. They are the college stars and are men or women with a definite philosophy of life.

They live for the most part above the sordid level of mankind in general.

On the other hand, the low forehead denotes a person more interested in gaining knowledge through the sight and by means of traveling than through books and similar methods of learning.

But foreheads can be divided into the broad and the narrow and each indicates something. The broad forehead belongs to the broad-minded person with liberal views and with a wealth of logic stored up for instant use, while the narrow forehead indicates a person who is just about as narrow. He is the narrow, pinched, contracted person we read of in literature and history.

But foreheads can be divided in still another way, and this division will give us still more insight into a person's mental development. We will divide the forehead into three equal parts by means of lines running from left to right. When the first section of the forehead, or that section just over the eyes, is full and appears to be well developed, it denotes a person who is quick to gain knowledge. They understand a thing before it is half explained. In passing along a street they will see fifty objects while their companion will see only five. They are the people who can look into a window for a second and then tell a greater part of what was in the window. Often such persons have quite a "bump" over their eyes, and if this is very much pronounced it means that their power of gaining knowledge by seeing is especially well developed. Such people, with a marked development of this part of the forehead, are known to have marked perceptive faculties.

The second section of the forehead, or that section just above the section containing the perceptive faculties, is the part that gives us the power to analyze, classify, criticise and, to some extent, remember. People with this part of the forehead well developed will be able to use what they gain through their other faculties and tabulate it in some regular order. Great schemes are often hatched in this part of the forehead, and so when we meet a person with a large forehead in the central part we can feel sure that he is a person who thinks and has something practical to give to others.

The third section of the forehead, or that portion that comes at the top of the head just under the hair on the top of the head, is the reason "factory." When this part of the forehead is well developed it means that that person is doing a great deal of thinking of a higher order. Philosophers and metaphysicians and others who are working on the higher sciences and studies have a well-developed upper forehead. Such people are the reasoners of the world.

Now we come to the eyes. In the first place eyes can be large or small. Large eyes indicate a greater amount of vivacity than small eyes. They belong to the person who is lively and full of activity. They are generally quick thinkers and are more emotional than the small-eyed person. And of course the small-eyed person is the reverse of this. Small-eyed people are generally sluggish in habits and temperament.

Eyes can also be prominent or deep-seated. If the former, then they denote a person who has a large command of language and is capable of writing and speaking. Such a person also takes in a great deal at sight, but for that reason is not as close an observer as a person whose eyes are less prominent. Eyes that are less prominent, that seem to be set farther in the head, see less at a time, but are more accurate in their seeing. What they see they really see.

And eyes can be more or less round or they can be somewhat elongated. The round eye lives much in the senses and thinks very little, while the somewhat elongated-eyed person sees less but thinks more.

Considerable importance is attached to the nose as a means of telling character, so it would be well to make a mental note of that fact for later use. Noses are divided into five classes or types, each with characteristics of its own. The Roman nose, strong, prominent and with a ridge near the eyes, is the first type we shall consider. Primarily it is the nose of the executive. It denotes energy, decisiveness, aggressiveness—in fact, it is the nose of the conqueror. People with this type of nose know no fear or defeat. They are the reckless souls who forge ahead in spite of all obstacles that are put in their way. Personal comfort or the welfare of others means less to them

than their own success, and this liberal quantity of grit makes them very successful.

The Greek nose is straight, even and nicely chiseled; it is the nose of refinement. People possessing this type of nose have a great deal of natural refinement and love artistic and beautiful things. The greatest art lovers in the world's history were the Greeks after whom this type of nose has been named. Artists very frequently have this type of nose. Such people have considerable energy, but it is not of the "set-the-world-afire" variety such as is found in people with the Roman nose.

The Jewish nose is essentially the commercial nose, so called because the Jew is the acme of commercial development. This type of nose indicates the natural trader, abounding in worldly shrewdness, insight into character and an ability to coin this knowledge into the coin of the realm. It must be remembered that this nose is always wide as well as ridged.

The snub nose is the nose of undevelopment. It denotes a person of marked undevelopment and weakness, in fact the degeneration of the human. All that is undesirable in human nature falls to the lot of the person with a snub nose. It is a noticeable fact that throughout history the people who have made their mark and whose record is being handed down from civilization to civilization have with practically no exception been people with noses other than the snub. It is the unfortunate nose.

The Celestial nose, which is somewhat like the snub nose except that it is longer and far less upturned at the end and is the inquisitive nose. Such people are always asking questions. This nose is quite common among women and generally denotes a person who likes to look up to or lean on another.

In considering the cheeks we are almost considering the entire face because the cheeks give the contour to the face itself. Generally speaking, a full, round face indicates a person with considerable vitality. Such people are getting the full benefit of the food they eat in that it is building up a fit body. A face with cheeks of less distinct outlines indicates a person more liable to disease and not quite as rugged. Prominent cheek bones indicate a person of more or less muscular strength and with quite a bit of passion and energy in their make-up. The delicate-chiseled cheek with pleasing curves so often found in women and mental giants denotes a large degree of intellectuality, culture and mentality in general. The hollow cheek is a danger signal that the possessor should look after his health.

It is said that character may be judged by the way a person speaks, but if we study a person's mouth we can arrive at their character whether they speak or not, because the mouth is a very plain indication of character. The larger the mouth the more character it shows, so a person with a small mouth is a person with very little character. When the lips are thick and coarse and more or less irregularly formed they denote considerable strength and power, but with a corresponding amount of rudeness and coarseness. On the other hand fine, well-formed and beautifully outlined lips indicate a mental development just as delicate and refined, with considerable susceptibility. If the line dividing the two lips is straight, as is often the case with men, it denotes strength and hardness. Narrow lips show a lack of affection, determination and a reserved disposition. Mouths that are slightly open mean frankness and plain-spokenness. On the other hand, closed lips indicate self-control. Up-curved corners of mouths show happy characters, and down-curved are the reverse.

Chins are divided into five classes or types, and the names given to each type indicate the form of that particular chin.

The pointed or narrow round chin is indicative of congenial love. Such a person will have a mental picture of their "ideal," and when they fail to find the "ideal" will very often remain single all their life rather than marry one who falls outside of what they have set up as perfect and acceptable.

The indented chin, the chin with a slight depression in the center as distingushed from the dimple, is a person who craves loving and affection. Such people are continually seeking love and affection from the opposite sex, and are conceited.

The narrow, square chin is the chin of the person who likes to love, and therefore such a person will be very congenial with a person having the indented chin, the one craving love and the other loving to bestow it.

The broad, square chin is the chin of the ardent lover who worships the person on whom he bestows his affection. Jealousy is often a part of the character of such a person and when the trait is even more pronounced insanity may result.

The broad, round chin is a sign of ardent love together with a great steadfastness and durability. Such people marry and stay married. They want children and do all in their power to have them.

Even the neck can give us an insight into a person's character. A short, thick neck denotes vitality and considerable tenacity. More of the animal nature is evidenced by such a neck, which is a point that should not be overlooked. To know our weaknesses is half the battle of life, because we can then overcome them.

Ears which often seem to have been made for hat rests really indicate character along with the other features of the face. Generally speaking, a large ear and one that is thin indicates a person with a deficiency along this line. Small ears show stinginess. Large-eared people invariably live longer than those with small ears.

A large ear denotes a liberal person of more democratic tendencies than a person with a small ear who is generally of a more aristocratic sort. Ears that stick out at an angle show an obstinate and aggressive character, while delicately chiseled ears lying close to the head indicate great refinement.

We have considered most of the features of the face and the reader will be able to delineate his own character to some extent by applying the facts here outlined. They will give him some definite points about himself. Now we will go from the consideration of the various parts of the face as separate features to the face as a whole, and see what that can tell us.

A consideration of the entire face will give us a general outline of what we are, while a consideration of the separate features give us more specific information.

As we look at people we often think that certainly no two are alike, but the exact opposite of this is true. All people can be divided into three classes or types. The only exception of this statement is where a person is a mixture of two or three types, which would seem to give us still other classes of persons, but in reality a person who is a mixture of two or three types is a sub-division of the types themselves.

The first type that we will consider is the motive or mechanical type. People who belong to this type have a bony structure that is rather large and the bones are generally more long than they are broad, making the body somewhat angular. Such people are very often quite tall and striking in appearance. The face is oval or oblong in shape and the cheek bones are often quite pronounced and high. The neck is generally quite long, while the shoulders are broad. Such people usually have a dark complexion and dark eyes and hair and their features in general are more or less pronounced.

These people possess a great deal of bodily strength, ease of action, love of physical exercise, energy and a large capacity for work.

Such people are firm, self-reliant, perserving and constant in friendship and love. They are generally leaders and have the power to carry others with them without trouble.

They are the people of action, people who like to think and act and their vast physical strength helps them carry through any cause. With them it is their physical power rather than their mental power.

The vital or nutritive type is the second type that we will consider. These people have a thick and broad body and are generally shorter. Their face is more or less round, the nostrils somewhat wide, the neck rather short, the shoulders quite broad and well rounded, and the chest somewhat full. Their complexion is more or less florid and their hair generally somewhat light.

Such people possess considerable vigor, but their physical self is not as tough as the motive type. They are lovers of fresh air and exercise of all kinds and seem to always be waiting to do something to take up the constantly increasing store of vitality. However, play rather than work seems to appeal to them.

As far as their mentality is concerned they are active, impulsive, enthusiastic, versatile and

often fickle. They are less firm than elastic, with a corresponding lack of persistency. On the other hand, they are very often quite brilliant.

They are quite passionate, most always cheerful, genial and likable. Such people like good things to eat and are often liable to eat too much. This one characteristic is often their undoing.

The third type is the mental or nervous type whose face takes the form of a pear, being broader at the top or forehead than at the bottom or chin. Such people have a slight framework, a head that is rather large, a high and somewhat pale forehead, slender neck, rather bright eyes and only a moderate chest. A certain delicacy and grace marks their whole bodily structure. Even their hair is soft and fine and generally not very dark. And their skin is also soft and of fine texture.

These people are very sensitive, have refined feelings and desires, very good tastes, are lovers of all that is beautiful and artistic, and are quite emotional. They have a mentality that is noted for its quickness and this quickness is also noticed in their other senses as well. They possess a very active imagination. These people are frequently found in literature, art, and poetry. They represent the mental development of the highest order.

The facts that I have given about Physiognomy and its ability to delineate character are, of course, not all that can be said about this science. They are simply the framework, but they are enough to enable one to test out the science for themselves and see whether it rings true. What is your opinion now?

In my next article I will take up the science of Phrenology or the judging of character by the formation of the brain and the top and back of the head. This science is somewhat related to Physiognomy, or rather the latter is somewhat related to the former, as we will see.

SPIDER SILK WOVEN BY CLEVER MACHINE

FROM time to time the ingenuity of scientists has been exercised with a view to devising a substitute for the silk worm's product, to find another insect that will produce something very similar at a lower cost.

It is an old idea that the spider might be employed in this way. The problem has ever been how to obtain a sufficient quantity of the spider thread and how to find it without breaking or tangling.

A Frenchman named Cachot harnessed a spider to a machine of his own invention. The machine contained tiny bobbins that revolved constantly. The thread was wound as the spider spun it, not after it had been made. The end of the web, which was attached to the body of the spider, was caught and fastened firmly to a bobbin. Then the machine was gently put in motion. The spider, finding that his web reeled away, apparently of its own volition, naturally pulled in the opposite direction to get away. But, it is said, Cachot found to his great delight that the spider did not pull with sufficient force to break the thread, but actually seemed to enjoy the process, maintaining just enough tension to keep the web in continual motion. Many spiders were tried in this way, and at last a sufficient quantity of their product was obtained to be woven into a fabric. This, it is alleged, was superior to natural silk in tenuity, elesticity and tenacity.

But dresses of spider web are still beyond the reach of any save the very rich. A species of Madagascar spider is the only one that supplies the right sort of thread. Size for size, this spider's thread is tougher than bar iron.

The Frenchman who conducted these interesting experiments stated that another advantage of the spider as a producer of silk is that, having been emptied of its web, it can be fed and petted back to condition, when it will submit to another reeling without showing ill effects.

Current News

WATER AND HEAT IN ONE WELL

Water, heat and light from a single well less than 250 feet deep has made John Schaeffer, an Allegany County farmer, envied by his neighbors. When Schaeffer hired drillers to sink the well he was after water. The workmen tapped a considerable pocket of gas and a gas pipe was run down beside the water pipe. The gas has continued to flow steadily even in periods of low temperature.

LAD SWALLOWS STAPLE

While he was holding a small iron staple between his fingers and trying to whistle upon it, Harold Walker, six years of age, of Burnside, Pa., drew the staple into his throat, where it lodged with the points up. He was taken to the Clearfield Hospital, but efforts to remove the object caused the sharp prongs to penetrate the flesh. Fear of piercing the windpipe caused surgeons here to advise that the boy be taken to Philadelphia for treatment, as the staple is slipping down his throat and may enter his lungs. The lad suffers little inconvenience.

FISH MEAL

Experiments with fish meal as a food for domestic animals have been made abroad and it has been found that pigs and cattle eat it with relish.

In Norway the meal is made from cod and herring. The codfish are dried first in the air and then in an oven, and afterward ground into meal. They make a highly nutritious food. Herring are boiled and placed under pressure before being ground.

In England and Scotland fish meal is made from the waste parts of all kinds of fish, first steamed and then dried and ground. This meal usually contains from 55 to 65 per cent. of albuminoids, 3 to 6 per cent. of fats and from 14 to 18 per cent. of calcium phosphate.

LEAVES BODY TO DOCTORS

Frank Geiger, thirty-five, of No. 1010 Hoe avenue, Bronx, New York, shot and killed himself the other day while in bed in a room of the Grand Hotel. He registered there on March 1 as "Frank Wolgast and wife, Troy, N. Y." When found dead with a bullet hole in his temple notes he had written were examined by the police.

It stated that Geiger was unable to maintain his family in the manner he desired and therefore had decided to end his life. The note directed that his body be given to the medical fraternity for use and to "burn what the doctors do not want." No woman appeared at the hotel with Geiger, though he had registered as if accompanied by his wife, and told the clerk he expected her to join him.

YEAR OF 13 MONTHS IS URGED

A movement directed at "our antiquated time calendar" is getting under way. The "Liberty Calendar Association of America" is behind it.

It is proposed that there be thirteen months fifty-two weeks and 364 days, with the odd day called "New Year's Day," to come between Dec. 31 and Jan. 1. In Leap Year the odd day would be called "Leap Year Day," and would come between June 30 and July 1. The extra month is to be called "Vera," because it takes in "Varnal Equinox" and would begin spring.

By the arrangement outlined in a bill introduced in the House of Representatives Schall of Minnesota, each day of the month would always come on a certain day. Easter would fall on March 14, corresponding with the present April 9, and would always be the ninety-ninth day of the year.

The proponents declare that "this simplification will dispense with need for printed calendars, saving about $25,000,000 a year from this alone."

CURED BY 45 SKIN GRAFTS

Dorothy Cannon, six years old, of Dallas, Tex., who has undergone fourteen serious operations and forty-five skin-grafting applications, will be discharged from a hospital here within another month, in good health, doctors declared recently. The child was given up as dead when found lying on a live wire in a puddle of water last June and then looked upon as a hopeless case for two months after she was brought to the hospital. Her clothing had been burned away and her body was black.

"The only trouble we have had," said the surgeon in charge, "is selecting dates for the skin-grafting. There were always too many present trying to give their skin."

HORSES SLEEP STANDING UP

Horses seldom lie down to sleep. Throughout their entire lives most of them sleep while standing on their feet. The reason for this is believed to be that the horses are afraid that an insect might crawl into their nostrils. This is a very likely explanation when we consider that a horse's nostrils are the most sensitive part of its body, says Popular Science Monthly. If the insect could not be removed it could easily irritate a horse to death. Many horses will not lie down because they have once been "foundered," that is, unable to get up unassisted.

Another curious fact about a sleeping horse is that it seems always to keep its faculties working. Its ears, for instance, keep constantly twitching and the animals seems to hear the slightest noise. Because of this it would probably be impossible for a man to enter a stable quietly enough to prevent his waking up every horse in it. Horses act peculiarly also in time of fire. They will burn to death rather than rush out from the stalls.

PREDICTS DAY'S TRIP AROUND THE WORLD

The celebrated airplane designer, Breuget, addressing a meeting of French scientists, said he had plans for building an airplane which would be able to fly from Paris to Buenos Aires in three days, making only five stops on the way. The cost of the journey, he said, would, roughly, correspond with that of a first-class passage to-day on an ocean liner. The machine, which M. Breuget expects to produce before many years have elapsed, will have a speed of 253 kilometers an hour, and will weigh twelve or thirteen tons. It will carry twenty passengers, one ton of baggage, a crew of seven and four tons of gasoline.

Continuing his address, M. Breuget traced the future development of flying at high altitudes with the turbo-compressor invented by Rateau, which enables engines to maintain their power in rarefied air. Basing his arguments on strict mathematical calculations, M. Breuget told of an airplane which, leaving Paris and flying at an altitude of 12,000 meters, would fly completely around the earth and return to Paris twenty-four hours later. The ultimate speed of machines flying at this height, he said, would be 800 meters per second, which is faster than that of an artillery projectile.

MORE ABOUT THE KANGAROO

We are so accustomed to see kangaroos in zoological gardens that we are apt to overlook the fact that they are to be numbered among the most remarkable animals in the world. They belong to a group of animals known as marcupials, so called because the females possess a pouch or "marsupium" for the reception of their young.

When first born, a baby kangaroo only measures an inch or two in length. The mother picks up her tiny infant with her front paws and places it in her snug and warm pouch, where it remains for several months, until it is grown up and is able to look after itself. Kangaroos are very fond of their young ones, and when hunted they do their best to save them from their enemies.

But if they find that they are being overtaken and it is impossible to escape from their foes, they turn their babies out of their pouches and scamper off faster than ever. Although this action may appear to be somewhat unkind, yet, in reality, it is done for the best of reasons, for if the mother manages to get away from her pursuers, owing to her being no longer burdened with the weight of her infant, she afterward returns to look for her offspring, and once again puts it in her pouch.

ROCK DUST POISONS THE HUMAN BODY

Professor Collis has been conducting some experiments on the effect of dust on the human body. He has shown that silica or rock dust is actually a poison on the human body. It is, of course, well known that men who work in dust are liable to tuberculosis; for instance, the South African gold miners, who are especially exposed to fine particles of quartz, and who develop what is known there as miner's phthisis; such workers are also susceptible to kidney troubles. The experiments go to show that minute fibers, which are free in the atmosphere, collect dust particles and hold them in suspension so that they are inhaled.

WHITE ISLAND

An island about thirty miles northeast of New Zealand is, perhaps, the most extraordinary island in the world. It is an enormous mass of rocks nearly three miles in girt rising to a height of 900 feet above the sea, in the Bay of Plenty, and is perpetually enveloped in a dark cloud which is visible for nearly 100 miles. In fact, White Island, which is shaped somewhat like a hollow tooth, is the crater of a volcano, and it is the beginning of what is called the Taupo Zone, some of the volcanoes of this one being under water. The clouds which envelop the island are caused by the steam from the hot springs which boil around the edge of the lake in the center of the island. The whole island is perpetually making and depositing sulphur, and its already limitless deposit of high-grade sulphur, which has accumulated through the ages, is destined to make the island famous from a commercial point of view, though for many years it has been classed as merely one of New Zealand's scenic wonders. The lake in the centre of the island is fringed with bright yellow deposits, for hot springs forever bubble on the water's surface.

GHOSTS VEX FAMILY

Ghosts are worrying the family of Frank Becker, farmer, Newton, N. J., and preventing them from sleeping, according to their story. The Beckers live in a house about a hundred years old, in the northwest part of Sussex County. The house was remodeled from a wayside inn used by stage-coach travelers a century ago as the overnight stopping-place between Sussex and Warren Counties. According to the story, an owner of the inn was murdered mysteriously there many years ago.

Two nights ago, Becker said, he was awakened about midnight by a strange noise on the front porch. The snow made it almost as light as day, he said, and there was not a breath of wind stirring. The noise was "a swish, crack and swish," according to Becker's description. He was so alarmed, he said, that he got up and fired his gun three times. This aroused a neighbor, Kenneth Adamson, in a farmhouse about a hundred yards away, who came over to investigate. There were no footsteps nor other signs of any one in the vicinity. The strange sound occurred again at midnight last night, Becker said, making his wife so nervous that she cannot sleep.

"PETRIFIED MAN" FOUND IN COAL MINE

The body of a man thought to have lived in a prehistoric age which has been uncovered in a coal drift near Welch, Okla., a shallow coal field forty miles south of this city, was found at the end of a drift 200 feet from the surface and on its haunches, as if it had been fighting off an animal. It was found deeply imbedded in the coal and is petrified.

The body is complete except for hands and feet. The head is symmetrical and save for slight depressions where the eyes might have been bears no recognizable features of a human. The form is about six feet in height and indicates an unusually rugged physique. The thighs measure thirty-six inches in circumference. The portion of the leg from the knee to where the foot should be is of unusual length.

The strata in which the object was found gave up stones in which tracks have petrified. They measure more than three feet across and are believed to have been made by a prehistoric animal. The strange formation of rock was found in a swamp where several years ago remains of a prehistoric animal were found.

Mystery Magazine

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

1 "The Eel Man," by Robert Carlton Brown.
2 "Zitana of Maison Rouge," by F. W. Doughty.
3 "The Mysterious Web," by Armstrong Perry.
4 "Under the Hypnotic Spell," by Dr. H. Enton.
5 "The Silken Sheath," by Crittenden Marriott.
6 "A Fortune Teller's Secret," by Gladys Hall.
7 "The Mystic Emblem," by Marie Coolidge Rask.
8 "The Cards of Fate," by William Goode.
9 "Mr. Bachelor's Apartments," by W. H. Osborne.
10 "The Inner Wheel," by Octavius Roy Cohen.
11 "The Voice of the Valley," by Robt. C. Brown.
12 "The Sign of the Seven Sharks," by Chas. F. Oursler.
13. "Under a Mask," by Crittenden Marriott.
14 "Case 4,444," by Gladys Hall.
15 "After a Million," by Police Captain Howard.
16 "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by Chas. F. Oursler.
17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by Redfield Ingalls.
18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Enton.
20 "The Magician Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline C. Bouve.
27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29. "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith Sessions Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by Beulah Poynter.
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector J. Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieutenant Robt. W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "The Sanctuary," by William Hamilton Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by C. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign on the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura Reid Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William Hamilton Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by Ethel Rosemon.
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by William H. Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Burleigh.
62 "The Velvet Touch," by Julian Darrow.
63 "The Clue of the Red Lamp," by Chas. F. Oursler.
64 "The Scheme of Solomon Snare," by W. H. Osborne.
65 "Quicker Than the Eye," by Ralph Cummins.
66 "The Clue of the Dark Room," by Hamilton Craigie.
67 "The Tongue of Osiris," by Marc Edmund Jones.
68 "Detective Wade's Big Case," by Ethel Rosemon.
69 "The Spirit Bell," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
70 "The House Behind the Wall," by Julian Darrow.
71 "The Admiral's Spoons," by Wm. H. Osborne.
72 "The Canine Clue," by Thos. J. Lally.
73 "The Psychic Enemy," by Arthur Wm. Andreen.
74 "The Wonder Girl," by Ralph Cummins.
75 "On the Wrong Trail," by Ethel Rosemon.
76 "The Spirit Witness," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
77 "On the Wrong Trail," by Ethel Rosemon.
78 "The Stolen Year," by Edmund Elliot.
79 "The Affair at Hollywood House," by Wm. Kofoed.
80 "A Keyless Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie.
81 "Professor Satan," by Charles Fulton Oursler.
82 "Who Killed McNally?" by Beulah Poynter.
83 "The Clue of the Whorl," by Katherine Stagg.
84 "The 'Czar' and the Ring," by Edmund Elliot.
85 "A Clue of Flame," by Jack Bechdolt.
86 "The Face in the Crowd," by Marc Edmund Jones.
87 "The Man in Room No. 7," by Chas. F. Oursler.
88 "Four Ten-Dollar Bills," by Henry G. Howland.
89. "A Challenge to Power," by Dr. Harry Enton.
90 "The House Next-Door," by Police Captain Howard.
91 "The Trance Detective," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
92 "Friday at Twelve," by Katherine Stagg.
93 "By the Left Hand," by Hamilton Craigie.
94 "The Melody of Death," by Jack Bechdolt.
95 "The Trick of the Great Yen How," by William Hamilton Osborne.
96 "At Moriarity's," by Fred S. Shuey.
97 "The Last Star of the Films," by Jack Bechdolt.
98 "Counterfeit Clues," by Chas. F. Oursler.
99 "The Cross," by W. S. Ingram.
100 "A Secret Service Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie and Elliot Balestier.
101 "A Crimson Price," by Elliott Lester.
102 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by Gottlieb Jacobs.
103 "A Museum Mystery," by Jack Bechdolt.
104 "The Little Red Book," by J. Alexander Young.
105 "A Man from Siam," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.

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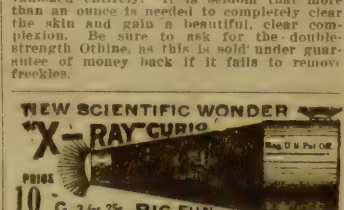
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The natives of that region declare that on the sight of human beings the bulls become enraged and rush, often treeing hunters and trappers. When questioned as to why they did not shoot the cows or calves for meat the Indians replied that it was tough and tasted like cedar oil.

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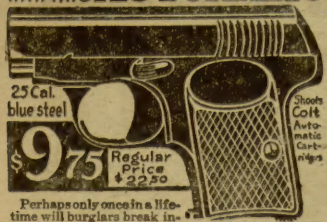

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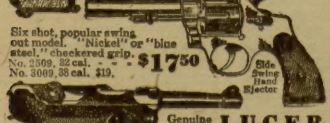

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For instance, many snail shells are perfect spirals, the inner part of a spider's web is a beautiful flat spiral, the inner dark part of a sunflower is a multitude of interesting spirals, the segments of pine cones are set in perfect spirals, the eyes of a peacock's tail feathers form a series of radiating and interesting segments of spirals.

Fabre, the great French entomologist who devoted his life to the study of insects, made the comment that the mathematically perfect spirals of nature were proof of the existence of a Divine mathematician. For how could such creatures as snails and spiders, for example, know or make the complex calculations that are involved in building a spiral? A high school course in mathematics does not reach nearly that far.

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